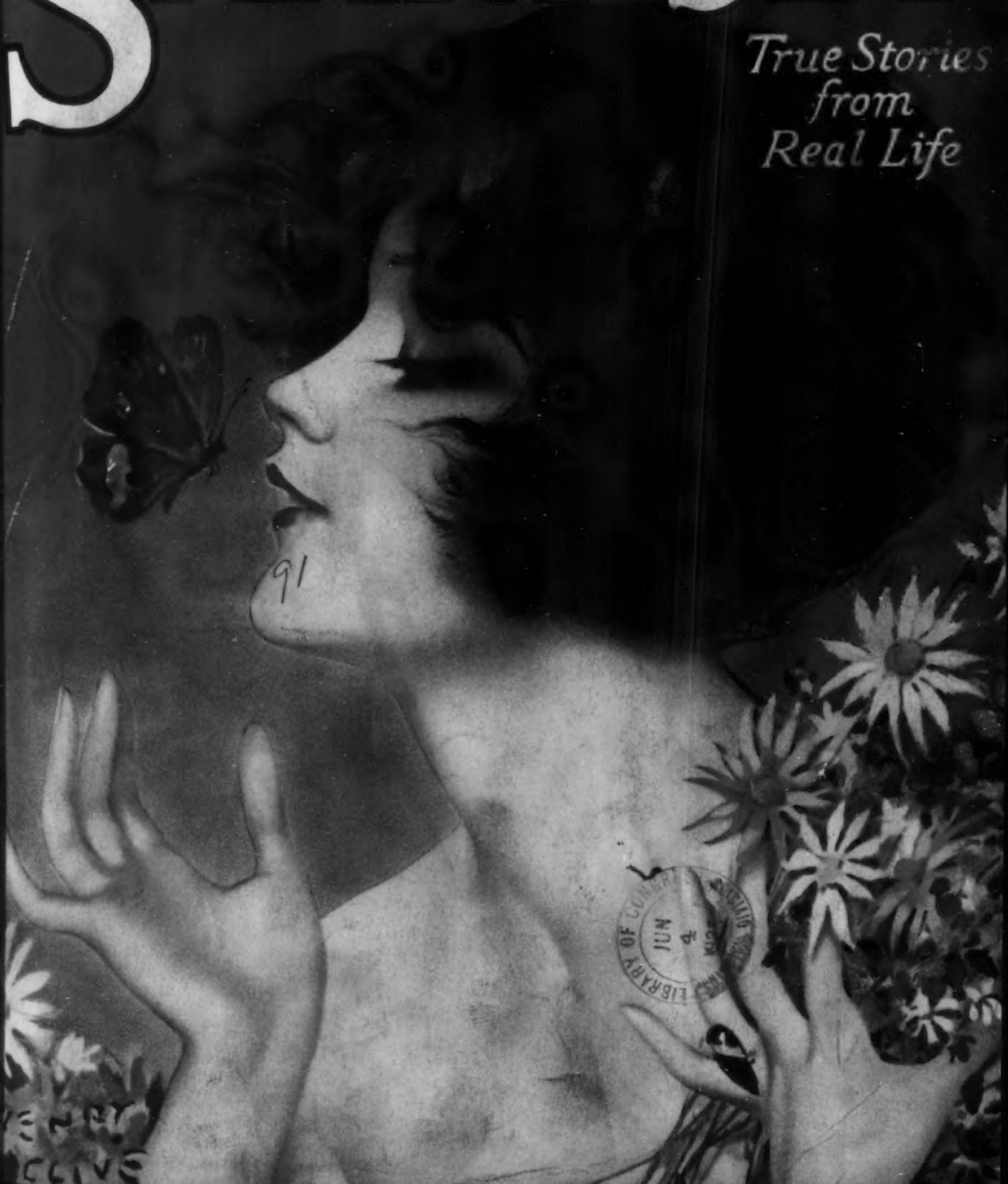


July - 25 Cents

SMARTSET

*True Stories
from
Real Life*





As pioneers in the field of oral hygiene, we believe that the makers of Listerine are logically qualified to introduce this new and drastic note into dentifrice advertising. And we believe that a very definite public benefit will result from this endeavor to make the nation properly conscious of the disease dangers that may result from tooth abscesses.

—Lambert Pharmacal Company.

The drawing at the left was made from an authentic X-ray photograph supplied by a leading New York X-ray laboratory which serves many dental surgeons in their study and treatment of diseased teeth—WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE YOUR X-RAY WOULD SHOW?

Hidden wells of poison

Back of beauty may lurk dread disease

It's a fact: back of many a lovely smile and even gleaming teeth may be **hidden wells of poison**—tooth abscesses. And often unknown to the person so afflicted.

Meanwhile, these poison pockets at the base of the teeth may be gradually undermining the health.

They seep their deadly bacteria through the entire system and bring on any one of many serious and oftentimes fatal illnesses.

According to eminent dental authorities, 78 out of 100 adults today have tooth abscesses: usually they do not know it themselves and very often such abscesses directly or indirectly cause many dread diseases.

Diseases that result

Among the diseases so caused are rheumatism and joint diseases; heart and kidney trouble; stomach and intestinal derangements; to say nothing of more minor disorders ranging from simple headaches to insomnia and nervous affections.

In spite of these grave dangers that lurk in tooth abscesses, relatively few people today ever think of visiting a dentist until pain drives them there. Whereas, only a good dentist can really place you on the safe side.

Protect yourself

You are probably like most other human beings; so while at this moment you realize all these dangers you, too, will very likely put off going to your dentist.

In the meanwhile, however, you owe it to yourself to take one simple precaution: There is a dentifrice that will do very much to keep your teeth and gums in a healthy condition. Consequently, more and more dentists are today recommending Listerine Tooth Paste.

Because Listerine Tooth Paste, and this tooth paste only, contains all of the antiseptic essential oils of Listerine, the safe antiseptic. These healing ingredients help keep the gums firm and healthy and discourage the breeding of disease bacteria in the mouth.

Quick results—and safe!

This is an age when people want quick results. Listerine Tooth Paste is so formulated that it cleans your teeth with a minimum of brushing, calling for much less effort than is ordinarily required.

Also, this paste cleans with absolute safety. The specially prepared cleanser it contains is just hard enough to discourage tartar formation, yet not hard enough to scratch or injure tooth enamel. And, of course, you know how precious tooth enamel is!

Finally, Listerine Tooth Paste is sold at a price that is fair—large tube 25 cents—the right price to pay for a good tooth paste. Try it. Enjoy really clean teeth. But don't forget the importance of seeing your dentist regularly.—Lambert Pharmacal Company, Saint Louis, U. S. A.

If your dentist has not already handed you our booklet on tooth abscesses and a sample of our dentifrice, you may have both of these by addressing a postal to the Lambert Pharmacal Co., Saint Louis.

HIDDEN WELLS OF POISON IN YOUR MOUTH?



Ignorance of physical facts never brought happiness to any woman

UNLESS there is frank discussion there can be no real enlightenment on a subject such as feminine hygiene.

And *wrong* information—out-of-date information—is often worse than *no* information. Feminine health is too important, too vital a matter to be regarded in a haphazard way. The modern woman wants to know the truth and then judge for herself. She wants the benefit of every new idea.

The recent advances in the practice of feminine hygiene have all come about as an answer to one existing evil. And that is the evil of poisonous antiseptics.

The menace of poisonous antiseptics

Every physician and nurse is familiar with the effects of bichloride of mercury—its burning of the mucous membrane and its toughening of delicate tissues. Also the compounds of carbolic acid, which are caustic in their action and frequently result in an area of scar-tissue and hardening of the

membrane. Yet until recently such poisons were the only recourse for fastidious women who demanded real surgical cleanliness and a true antiseptic insurance against germs.

Every woman has reason to welcome Zonite

But fortunately this state of affairs is now a thing of the past. No longer need a woman run the risk of using powerful poisons for the purpose of feminine hygiene. No longer need she fear accidental poisoning in the home—a calamity all too common when the poison bottle is left within reach of little children who can not read the "skull-and-crossbones" warning. No longer need she face any of these dangers, for Zonite has arrived.

Zonite is a powerful antiseptic. In fact, Zonite is a real germicide, for it actually kills germs. It doesn't merely check germ-growth temporarily like the mild, sweet-tasting and bubbling antiseptics. It kills all the germs present and prevents

their multiplication. But besides being a powerful antiseptic, Zonite is an antiseptic harmless to human beings.

The most remarkable feature of Zonite is its great germicidal strength. It has more than forty times the strength, for instance, of peroxide of hydrogen, and is far more powerful than any dilution of carbolic acid that can be safely used on the human body.

No wonder then, that Zonite has been welcomed with satisfaction. A powerful antiseptic that can even be held in the mouth! In fact, dental authorities are recommending it highly for preventive oral hygiene. We should be glad to have you ask your physician for his opinion of Zonite.

A booklet that every mother will want to give her daughter

The important subject of feminine hygiene is thoroughly covered in a dainty booklet prepared by the Women's Division expressly for the use and convenience of women. The information it contains is concise and to the point. A delicate subject is treated with scientific frankness, as it should be. Send for it. Read it. Pass it on to others who need it. Thousands of women are today running untold risks

through the use of poisonous, caustic antiseptics. This book will bring all such women abreast of the times in a very important matter of health and comfort. The booklet is free. It is daintily illustrated and mailed in social correspondence envelope. Use the coupon below.

Zonite Products Company,
Postum Building, 250 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.

In Canada: 165 Dufferin St., Toronto.

Summer Uses for Zonite

For cuts, wounds, burns, scratches incidental to camp and beach life.

For insect bites, likely to become infected when scratched, especially in the case of children.

For poison ivy and other poisons of the woods.

For sunburn, another source of infection.

For the purification of drinking water from unknown sources.

For a daily mouth-wash to guard against pyorrhoea.

As a body deodorant.



I should like to have a free copy of the illustrated booklet you have prepared. (S-21)

Name

Address.....

In bottles, 50c and \$1
at drug stores
Slightly higher in Canada

If your druggist cannot supply you, send 50c direct to the Zonite Products Co.

Zonite

VOL. 76
NO. 5

SMART SET

JULY
1925*True Stories from Real Life*

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Although manuscripts and drawings are submitted at the owners' risk, every effort will be made to return those found unavailable.



One evening Herman was playing beautifully on his violin, while I held our youngest child, Joel, near me.

All of a sudden our second child, who had reached the mischievous age of six years, came running into the room with a small, brown booklet in his hand. It was my bank book, which I had not shown Herman yet. I trembled and asked the child to bring it to me, but it was too late. Herman was opening the book.

"What's this? A bank book! Where did it come from?"

"Mama's drawer," the child answered.

Herman began to read it, then his smile faded from his lips and his eyes blazed, and he burst out:

"What does this mean? Eight hundred dollars in your name? You're not satisfied with what I make, eh? You think you're better than I am? I'll show you!" Then he tore the bank book in half.

**Read this story of poverty
and a woman's love in the
August SMART SET**

Published monthly by the Magus Magazine Corporation, at 119 West 40th Street, New York, N. Y., U. S. A.

GÉRÔME d'UTASSEY, President; JOHN BRENNAN, Vice-President; R. E. BERLIN, Treasurer; R. T. MONAGHAN, Secretary.
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Copyright 1924, by Magus Magazine Corporation. 25 cents a copy; subscription price, United States and possessions, \$3.00 a year; Canada, \$3.50; Foreign, \$4.00. All subscriptions are payable in advance. We cannot begin subscriptions with back numbers. Unless otherwise directed we begin all subscriptions with the current issue. When sending in your renewal please give us four weeks' notice. When changing an address, give the old address as well as the new and allow five weeks for the first copy to reach you. Entered as second-class matter, March 27, 1900, at the Post Office, New York, New York, under the act of March 3, 1879. Additional entry at the Post Office, Chicago, Illinois.

The Fires that may smoulder within you—

Within every man worth while burn the fires of ambition.

In the vast majority of men those fires smoulder—glowing just enough to make them discontented with the part they play—failing to flame because they lack the tinder of self-confidence.

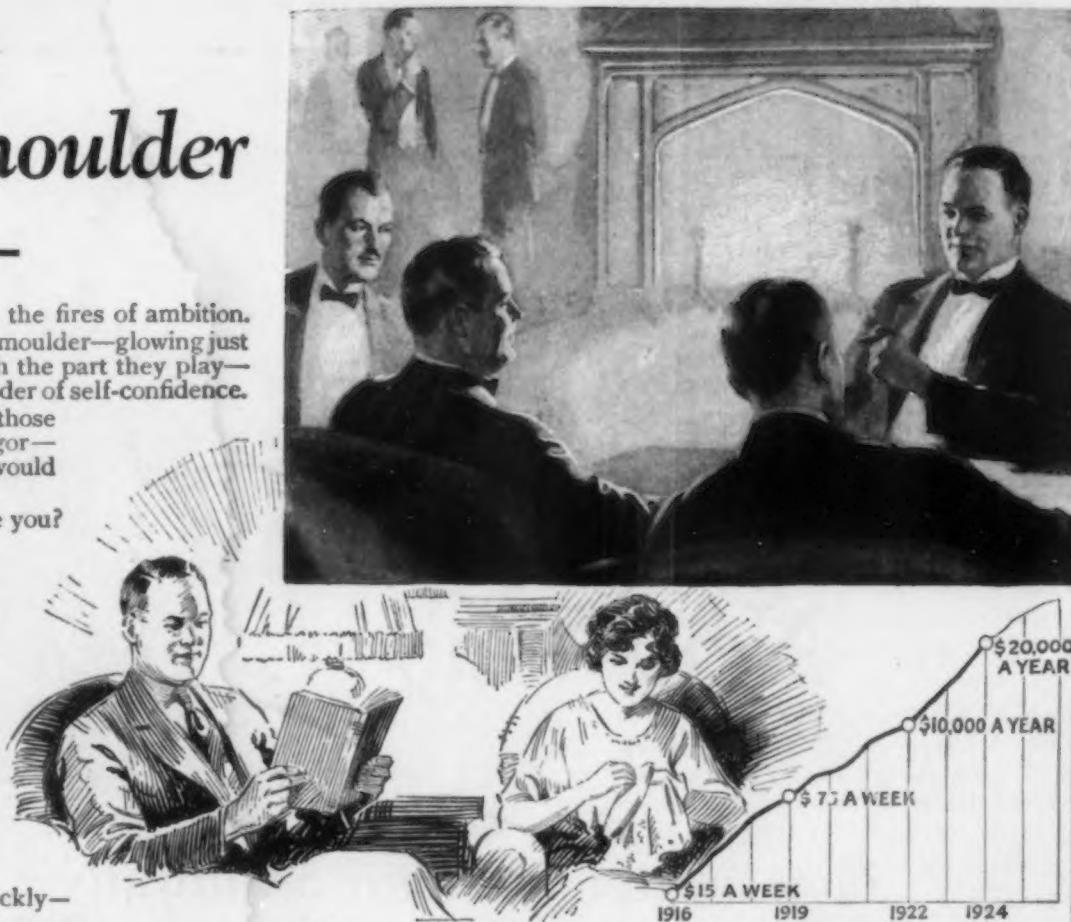
In the men who *get ahead*, however, those fires of ambition burn with a steady vigor—consuming every traitor-thought that would cheat them of their purpose.

"I am ambitious," you say. —But are you?

Is your "ambition" merely the wish to make more money?

Or—does it flame within you to the point where your thought is always and forever, "What can I do to improve my present output—How can I fit myself for larger responsibilities—How can I expand my mental stature till it measures up to that of the really great executive?"

Men who are truly ambitious will find the paragraphs which follow greatly to their profit. For in them they will learn how they may apply both torch and tinder to those smouldering fires of ambition to the end that they may quickly—



Kindle Them for Bigger Pay!

What are those traitor-thoughts which would cheat a man of his purpose?

Let us parade a few of them, and see them for the weak excuses which they really are—

"I never had a chance"—"I haven't the time"—"I have to work too hard"—"So-and-so says that home-study training doesn't get you anywhere"—"I haven't the money"—"Tomorrow—not today."

Now listen to this true experience—

Some seven years ago, A. V. McDuffie, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, was a book-keeper. His salary was \$15 a week. He had a wife and little daughter to support.

Truly, every single excuse which we have just paraded might reasonably have been professed—and accepted—by McDuffie.

For what did his friends contribute by way of advice? "They thought home-study training very, very foolish," writes McDuffie, "for 'Arch' will never do anything with it, and suppose he should finish the course, what good will it do him?"

But in McDuffie the fires of ambition

burned with a steady flame. He had confidence enough to believe that what LaSalle had done for the average man it could do for him—at least, in part.

"I had it in the back of my head to become a Certified Public Accountant," he writes. He enrolled for Higher Accountancy training with LaSalle Extension University.

That was seven years ago. Today, he heads his own independent firm of Certified Public Accountants in a city of the Middle West, has twenty-seven men in his employ, and commands an income better than \$20,000 a year.

* * *

Not every man who enrolls with LaSalle sets his goal at so high a place, so satisfactory an income—

Yet so sound and practical is LaSalle's salary-doubling plan that *promotion is the rule, not the exception.*

And witness to that rule is the fact that during only three months' time as many as 1,193 LaSalle members reported definite salary-increases totalling \$1,248,526, an average increase per man of 89 per cent.

Valuable Information Free

What would it be worth to you to learn of the opportunities in a highly-paid business field, to take the measure of your own ability to master a profitable profession, to discover a short, simple plan which, if followed, would make you successful years before you otherwise could hope for success?

"More than \$5,000"—that's the value B. T. Bailey, a Wisconsin man, places on the aid he got from LaSalle. C. J. James, a Toronto man, writes, "I would not take \$25,000 for my investment in LaSalle training, if a duplicate could not be had." Yet the information which pictures your opportunities, explains your personal requirements, makes clear the way to quickly realize those opportunities, is yours for a 2c stamp and two minutes of your time.

At this moment your start toward a bigger salary is as near you as the point of your pencil. The coupon will bring you details of the LaSalle salary-doubling plan, together with a copy of "Ten Years' Promotion in One," the story of how one man, after many wanderings, found the shorter path to success. There is, of course, no obligation.

You have often thought that you would mail a LaSalle coupon. This time—for the sake of a brighter future—ACT.

LA SALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

The World's Largest Business Training Institution

CLIP AND MAIL

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

Dept. 750-R

Chicago, Illinois

I shall be glad to have details of your salary-doubling plan, together with complete information regarding the opportunities in the business field I have checked below. Also a copy of "Ten Years' Promotion in One," all without obligation.

<input type="checkbox"/> Business Management: Training for Official Managerial, Sales and Departmental Executive positions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management—Foreign and Domestic: Training for position as Railroad or Industrial Traffic Manager, Rate Expert, Freight Solicitor, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Management Efficiency: Training for positions in Works Management, Production Control, Industrial Engineering, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Modern Salesmanship: Training for position as Sales Executive, Salesman, Sales Coach or Trainer, Sales Promotion Manager, Manufacturer's Agent, Solicitor, and all positions in retail, wholesale, or specialty selling.	<input type="checkbox"/> Railway Station Management: Training for position of Station Accountant, Cashier and Agent, Division Agent, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel and Employment Management: Training in the position of Personnel Manager, Industrial Relations Manager, Employment Manager, and positions relating to Employee Service.
<input type="checkbox"/> Higher Accountancy: Training for position as Auditor, Comptroller, Certified Public Accountant, Cost Accountant, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Banking and Finance: Training for executive positions in Banks and Financial Institutions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Modern Business Correspondence and Practice: Training for position as Sales or Collection Correspondent, Sales Promotion Manager, Mail Sales Manager, Secretary, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Law: Training for Bar; LL. B. Degree.	<input type="checkbox"/> Modern Foremanship and Production Methods: Training for positions in Shop Management, such as that of Superintendent, General Foreman, Foreman, Sub-Foreman, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Expert Bookkeeping: Training for position as Head Bookkeeper.
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		<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Spanish: Training for position as Foreign Correspondent with Spanish-speaking countries.
		<input type="checkbox"/> Effective Speaking: Training in the art of forceful, effective speech, for Ministers, Salesmen, Fraternal Leaders, Politicians, Clubmen, etc.
		<input type="checkbox"/> C. P. A. Coaching for Advanced Accountants.

Name _____ Present Position _____ Address _____



FREE: 5 DAY TRIAL!
Send no money.
Simply clip coupon below.

Amazing New Way



*Now marcel your hair beautifully
—in 5 minutes—at home!*

An alluring wave guaranteed, bobbed or unbobbed
And the cost is but half-a-penny!

Coupon offers free 5-day trial

THE loveliness of softly waved hair—chic, alluring!—may always be yours, now. No more times, between waves, when the curl has gone—when hair is not as pretty as it might be—when it is hard to arrange.

For now you can do as thousands of other attractive girls and women do—whether your hair is bobbed or long. Every day, if you wish, have a fresh marcel. Right at home—in five minutes! And the cost is actually about half a cent. It is a new method, approved by hair specialists.

The coupon below offers you an oppor-

tunity to try it, without cost, for 5 days. Send no money—simply clip the coupon.

An exquisite wave

This new way to keep your hair beautifully dressed was perfected to do two things: First, to give you a really professional wave in a very few minutes at home; and second, to reduce the cost.

You use the YVETTE Marcel Waver to do it. Specially designed to impart an exquisitely soft, but very distinct wave.

Simply attach it to an ordinary electric light socket, as you would an old-style "curling iron." But the YVETTE does what no "curling iron" could ever do.

First of all, it uses less heat. So cannot possibly burn or injure the life and lustre of your hair in any way. And this heat is applied by a new principle, to all parts of all hair.

So it does not matter whether your hair is dry and brittle, or whether it is very oily. The YVETTE Marcel Waver gives a perfectly charming wave to any hair. Not a round curl, but a real, professional-looking Marcel wave!

In five minutes your hair is beautifully waved. How nice to have this help, for instance, when going to the theater some evening—with little time to get ready. What a comfort not having to bother with hair-dressers' appointments and waiting!

YVETTE
MARCEL WAVER
pronounced EE-VET'



Buy several \$20 hats with what it saves!

In twelve months The YVETTE Marcel Waver will actually save you from \$40 to \$50 over and above its slight cost! And it will last for a lifetime. We guarantee it against defective workmanship or material, you know. Remember, too, that you take no risk at all in testing it for five days.

Then, too, it saves you a great deal of money! More than ten times enough to pay for itself, in twelve months. The cost for electric current, each time you use it, is less than half of a penny.

A remarkable offer

This unusual, new waver will delight you as it has thousands of others. It was originally made to sell at \$10—which is really a low price, when you consider the time and money to be saved. But we have determined to **reduce** the price—and, by selling still greater numbers, have just as large a business as ever. So we make this amazingly generous offer.

Simply clip, fill in and mail the coupon below. Don't send any money, unless you particularly wish to. We will immediately send you a YVETTE Waver. When the postman delivers it to your door, give him \$4.97, plus a few pennies postage, the new, reduced price. But—note this:

Keep and use the Waver for five days. Test it in any way you see fit. Then, if you are not entirely and completely delighted with what it does for your hair, with the saving in time and money, just send it back to us. Immediately, and without the slightest questioning, we will mail back your \$4.97. Isn't that fair?

Just think what a pleasure it's going to be, having your hair freshly and beautifully waved all the time! And with enough money saved to pay for several very lovely hats, a new suit, or frock! Clip your coupon now. Mail it today, sure.

Send No Money—5 Days' Trial

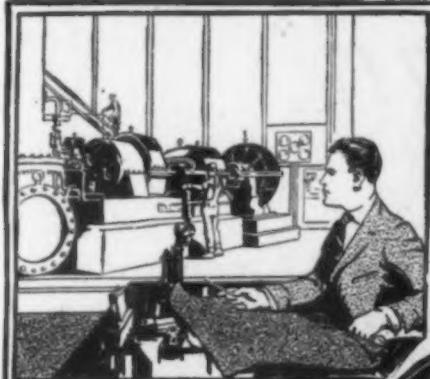
Distributing Division,
YVETTE et Cie., Dept. 39,
27 E. Huron St., Chicago.

Please send YVETTE Marcel Waver. I will deposit \$4.97 with postman when he brings it. You are to return this \$4.97 to me if, after 5-day trial, I do not care to keep the waver.

Name.....

Address.....

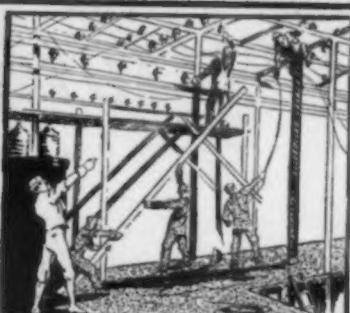
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Be Superintendent of an Electrical POWER PLANT



Own Your Own Electrical REPAIR SHOP



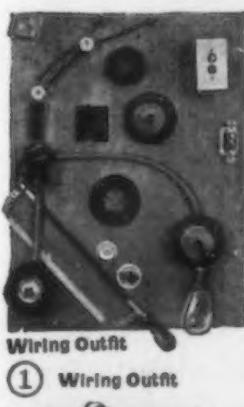
Boss Electrical Construction Jobs



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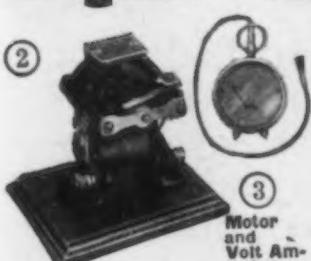
Chief
Engineer
Dunlap



① Wiring Outlet



②



③ Motor and Volt Ammeter



④ Radio Receiving Set

I guarantee
you a JOB and
a 50% RAISE
or money
refunded

GO INTO ELECTRICITY — the Business of a Million Opportunities

Go to Electrical School AT HOME!

Electric railways. This business DOUBLED in the last 9 years, and they say it will double again in the next 6 years!

\$60 to \$200 a Week for Electrical Experts

Enormous demand for all-around Electrical Experts as Power Plant Superintendents, Chief Electricians, Foremen of Construction, Electrical Draftsmen, Radio Engineers, etc. And with my training you can go into business for yourself with little capital and make \$3,000 to \$12,000 a year.

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Given You don't have to leave your home or quit your job, you don't need post-graduate Laboratory courses when you are Dunlap-trained. I send you these 4 costly, complete Electrical Outfits, all the Laboratory and Shop apparatus you need to understand Electrical laws, theories and principles easily and quickly. Not one penny extra for this equipment.

Write Me AT ONCE!

The first half of my training is APPLIED ELECTRICITY, a complete course. In the second half I give you Electrical Engineering subjects, doubling the quantity of instruction usually included in home-study training. Don't enroll for any home-training until you get a copy of my job-and-raise guarantee—until you get my sensational offers. Compare my 4 outfits with others—compare my training with others—compare my guarantee with others before you decide. I will show you how to become an Electrical Expert right in your own home—in spare time, for the least cost and in double quick time. Mail coupon for free book, surprise offers and complete information.

Chief Engineer DUNLAP, Electrical Division

AMERICAN SCHOOL

Dept. EB-251 Drexel Ave. & 58th St., Chicago

If you are now earning less than \$40 a week,

enroll for my home training in Electricity and I will guarantee you a permanent, satisfactory job after you finish—guarantee you at least 50% more pay—or refund every cent of your money I give you this written guarantee because my training actually makes you an Electrical Expert. The AMERICAN SCHOOL stands back of this guarantee with resources of over a million dollars.

22 Noted Electrical Engineers

This is not a one-man, one idea school. 22 famous Engineers and Executives of the following corporations and universities helped me make Dunlap-training the most complete and up-to-date:

1. General Electric Co.
2. Commonwealth Edison Co.
3. Crocker-Wheeler Co.
4. Cutler-Hammer Mfg. Co.
5. American Telephone & Telegraph Co.
6. Westinghouse Electric & Mfg. Co.
7. Western Electric Co.
8. Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.
9. Columbia University
10. Dartmouth College
11. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
12. Lehigh University
13. University of Vermont
14. Armour Inst. of Technology
15. University of Kansas
- AND MANY OTHERS

Earn While You Learn

As early as your eleventh lesson, I give you special training in wiring, Radio, Electrical repairing, motors, etc., so you can go out and start turning your instruction into cash. It's no trick to earn enough in a single evening to pay one month's tuition cost. So you needn't let lack of ready money or anything else keep you from this wonderful home-training.

MAIL COUPON QUICK!

Chief Engineer Dunlap,
AMERICAN SCHOOL
Dept. EB-251 Drexel Ave. &
58th St., Chicago

Please rush guarantee of a job and a 50% raise, free book, surprise offers and complete information on how I can become a real Electrical Expert at home in spare time.

Name.....

Address.....

The Pioneer Trail

DURING the early life of every nation there is some soul-stirring episode which in after years is written and rewritten; which covers many *unwritten* tragedies and triumphs; which all in all makes for vigor in the national development.

We in America are pioneers in our very lives. We as a nation have broken trails over the Atlantic and across a continent. We have tunneled the hills and bridged the rivers. We have built cities such as no other nation has dared to imitate. Now we are building traditions.

In the natural course of development we are beginning to break a pioneer trail in literature. We are breaking rules and regulations. We are daring to challenge the so-called *professional writers*. We are printing stories because they appeal to us—not questioning their value as masterpieces of conventional writing.

WITHIN a very few years the trail SMART SET is breaking will be analyzed and classified. Every tree which has been uprooted in order to clear the way will be examined carefully. Didactic savants will tell us why we did certain things. Their information will in all probability be enlightening to us, for we are only the pioneers breaking our way for the first time over the Oregon trail!

We have tried and discarded a score of methods for the successful development of our stories. We have tried and found interesting a score of other methods. We have found that we do not have to seek the work of *authors* in order to make our magazine interesting. We believe that hidden away in the lives of almost everyone is a vital, gripping story.

Some of us are able to tell these stories convincingly. Others, unfortunately, are not thus gifted. So it is hard

in a way, but one thing is true of SMART SET, always:—We give just as much attention to *your* story as we do to any by well-known writers.

No story can be great without being realistic. Every great story which has gripped the imagination of the world has had a basis of realism to support it.

WE HAVE chosen the first person style as a method of presentation because we believe it serves as a more natural medium for the inexperienced writer. In our stories the impressions are all received through one pair of eyes and one pair of ears.

Of course the element of interest is an elusive thing—not easily captured. Therein lies the greatest difficulty. We are too apt to look and see what someone else has written. That is why so few of us are successful.

The lone wolf hunted alone. The pioneer broke new trails, cleared his fields from within great forests, and built his home of logs which were as strange to him as new themes are to us. And until we grasp the vision and learn to seek new trails, and develop new ideas, we cannot hope to find our stories interesting other people. Hidden away in your life and in mine are strange experiences which we hesitate to tell—yet, that is where the pioneering must be done.

MARK TWAIN did not find Tom Sawyer in the realms of his imagination. Tom was a real boy, partly the author himself, partly the personalities of several other boys, but everything he did was real, and vital, and interesting—because it reminded us of things we ourselves have experienced.

And if Mark Twain were writing today I am sure he would see and understand the spirit which moves SMART SET and sets it out on a new trail.



Betty Makes a Hit!

By MARGARET DIXON

SHE leaned against one of the great porch pillars—a slim figure in cream flannel—eyes on the postman she had glimpsed at the end of the block.

Bob plucked a leaf. "Louise, Betty has to come! Arnold wants to know her."

"But she won't come," Louise admitted slowly. "Bob, she'd be miserable if she did. All she had to wear the whole time I was there last year was one faded linen." Her voice thickened with tears. "I'd rather have her here for the house party and the wedding than any girl I know! But when she writes it'll be some brave excuse."

The postman came up the walk. "Only one today, Miss Louise."

She tore open the letter, read aloud:

Dearest Louise:

Congratulations! I always wanted Bob for a cousin. As for that house party, I can hardly wait. If you knew how I'd been longing for parties, boating, dancing. . . . Oh, I'm coming, Louise. Count on my coming.

Lovingly, BETTY.

* * *

At the station next day with Bob, his college chum Arnold and several guests, Louise scanned the passengers eagerly. "Watch for a girl with brown eyes and brown hair," she warned. "Not much style about her, but the lovablest kind

of smile." Her voice trailed off in disappointment. "Do you suppose she missed—?"

"I'm afraid so," came Arnold's steady-ing voice. "Unless she was in the parlor car." His gray eyes swept the length of the platform, returned quietly to Louise. "That slim person there by the farther window—in the blue and tan—could that possibly be—?"

The slim person turned her radiant face full upon Arnold, upon Louise, came gladly, gloriously to them—girlish in straight blue that closed at the throat with soft tan collar . . . brown eyes dancing . . . color leaping under creamy complexion . . . perfection from the tip of her strapped tan pumps to the ribbon-brightened tan of that audacious little hat! "Louise—"

"Why—why—Betty!"

* * *

She came down to dinner in pale green taffeta, delicate and cool as a leaf under mist. Louise gazed down the length of the shining table—at rainbow dresses of her guests. Some of them more expensive than Betty's perhaps . . . but not one so incredibly lovely. She brought her eyes back adoringly to Betty's eager face, luminous under the attention of Arnold.

"Did you ever see such a change?" she whispered to Bob.

He shook his head. "Never!"

* * *

"Come up-stairs," Betty invited Louise a few hours later.

"May we come too?" cried Susan, one of Louise's bridesmaids. "We've been looking at each other's dresses; now we want to see yours."

Betty led them to where the maid had hung her soft things in a row. "Such a miracle's happened to me that I really want to share it."

First came a white crepe de chine revealing exquisite touches of leaf-green. Next an apricot chiffon festooned with dewy lace.

There were mingled exclamations of admiration—awe. "Oh, if I could afford such clothes—"

"That's what I want to explain," cried Betty, facing them, lips apart, excitement flushing her cheeks. "They really cost only a little. I've never had pretty clothes before. Louise knows how miserable I felt last year when she came to see me. But after she left, I wrote to the Woman's Institute, and oh, the good-looking things I made from the very first!"

"Betty!" Susan's voice rang out in wonder. "You didn't make these dresses yourself?"

"Yes, I did. Institute methods are surprisingly easy. Why, it's actually fun! I look at a picture I like, buy the goods and make it. That apricot cost only \$7.75. That blue flannel only \$11. This green taffeta—silk lace and all—only \$8.50."

Louise's eyes were shining. "Oh, I can hardly believe it!" she was saying. "It's all so wonderful. Do you think the Institute would help me too? You know Bob and I will have to go slow for a while."

"I'm sure it would," smiled Betty. "It helped me to find more happiness than I ever dreamed possible," laughed Betty, touching happily the pale green she wore.

* * *

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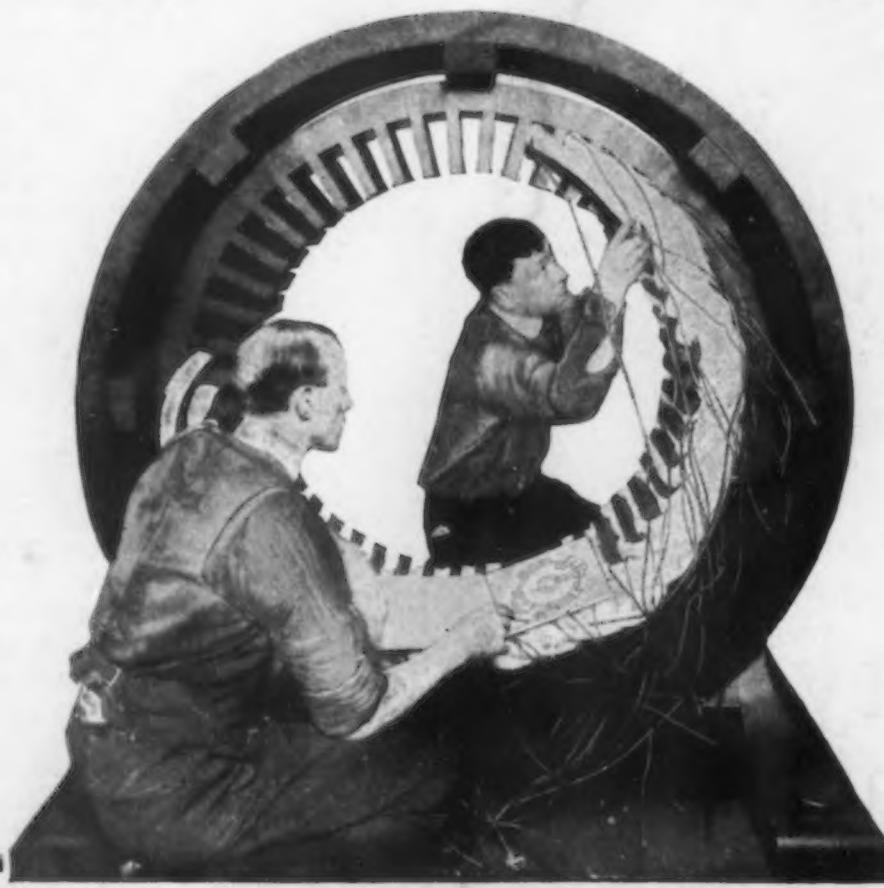
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SMART SET

VOL. 76
NO. 5

True Stories from Real Life

JULY
1925

The Fourth of July Parade

By HARRY LEE

Yes, but you wasn't in the parade!
Was only me in! Just one kid!
My grandfather said if I'm good I can march
Long with him. And I was, and I did.
My grandpa was dressed in his blue.
All brushed up it was, with the star
And the ribbon thing, and the hat
With the gold and the G.A.R.
And a man with a sash, on a horse
That kicked up its heels and shied,
Rode up side of Grandpa and me
And asked us, please wouldn't we ride.

"Be a long, stiff hike, Mr. Smith;
Prosecuting attorney's car
Is here at your service," he says;
"Be a powerful climb up thar!"
My grandpa just made his back straight,
And thanked him, and wouldn't get in:
"I marched with the boys these sixty years,
I guess I can make it again!"
Yes, and old Joe Beaver, he marched,
And Lafe, that's my grandpa's chum—
And all of the people just cheered and clapped
And crowded to see us come!

And the drums were as loud, and the fifes!
Grandpa said, "We've got to keep step."
And under his breath so no one could hear
He kept going, "Hep—Hep—Hep!"
And I carried my flag like he asked,
A great big flag, way on ahead,
A-fluttering up in the leaves,
Oh, gee! Nen my grandpa said:
"Boy, never forget this day."
And I told him he needn't be 'fraid.
Me and Grandpa are go'n' to march next year,
In the Fourth of July Parade!



Do You Believe

DR. FRANK



AS WE look about us in all departments of life we see the evil effects of a lack of trust. You can find it in the family. Children live up to about what is expected of them. If they are suspected constantly, they will endeavor to merit that suspicion. In other words, their character seems to be formed on the principle, "Give a dog a bad name, and then hang him."

If a child is always treated as a liar or a thief or as being disloyal, the time will come when he will think that he might just as well lie or steal or do something else that is wrong, as to have the name for it. If he is going to have the name, he might as well have the game.

The same thing is true in the relations between husband and wife. The most common cause of divorce is suspicion, and the things which grow out of suspicion. Very few people give grounds for divorce when they are wholly trusted.

A woman is apt to be good if she is believed to be good. A man is apt to go wrong if he is constantly suspected of going wrong.

Trust begets trust. There are none of us who do not like to be trusted, but we often forget that the only way to get trust is to give out trust. It is a matter that is paid in kind.

So it is with nations. The whole world is at present groaning under a burden of armies and navies, simply because every nation in the world suspects every other nation. Somehow we believe that our own people are guileless and honest and that those of other nations are tricky and undependable.

This suspicion of other nations is sometimes elevated to the level of patriotism. We imagine ourselves to be good patriots because we believe in our own country, but in none other. A man said that he was a good American because he hated all foreigners. He was aptly replied to by another

In People?

CRANE

who said that he was a better American because he hated everyone.

There is no truth more practical, more potent, than the truth that nothing will overcome evil but good. You might as well attempt to stop a raging fire by throwing on it gasoline, as to stop evil by adding to it more evil.

If others do not trust you, the way to stop that distrust is to believe in them. This is based upon confidence in the goodness of human nature, that it will rise to what is expected of it.

To be sure, you may be deceived. Those whom you trust may betray you and wrong you. But what of it? You will be no more deceived than if you distrust.

Spurgeon said somewhere that he who trusts everybody may be bitten, but he who distrusts everybody will be devoured.

Trust is a peacemaker. It does not keep the peace as do armies and navies, but it makes peace; that is, it creates a sentiment which eventuates in peace.

THIS is found to be true in business. For the business of the modern world is founded upon credit, which is a form of trust. The facts show that very little is lost by intelligently used credit. The old adage in business used to be "caveat emptor." This motto, "Let the buyer beware," has been abolished, and nowadays a merchant feels that it is his duty to protect the buyer. His business thrives upon the trust which the buyers have in him.

Somehow, trust brings out the best in us. We may all be a little bad and a little good, a strange mixture of good and evil, of the devil and angel. Trust operates to strengthen the angel in us, to make us better. Distrust always operates to encourage the devil in us and make us be our worst.





He would come to my window, the devil, because he knew how much I was afraid of the snakes.

AS THE high-headed little daughter of a retired British Army colonel with an Indian service record under Sir George White, I heard many strange tales of the superstitions that shadow the lives of the brown millions who move through the vastness of India at a snail's pace—so treacherous is the sun-scorched climate of the country. Later, as a young woman ready for the realms of society, I read the versions of these tales in the songs of our own Kipling, and of that romantic adventurer, Lawrence Hope.

I soon realized that the superstitions of India were countless, like the burning grains of its desert sand, for India is a land steeped in the mysticism of idolatrous centuries; cowed by pagan fears; awed by an uncanny faith in signs. Consequently, I soon found myself laughing at them, scorning them as silly twaddle born of barbaric ignorance. They provided fantastic entertainment for the ears, and made picturesque backgrounds for poems, I admitted readily enough to Father, and others.

As for believing them, and fearing them—decidedly, no! Such was my answer years ago. For in the long ago, secure in my Surrey home, I did not dream time and fate would one night prove the truth of a terrible superstition that belongs to the snake-loving natives of a templed country whose gods are graven and many-

faced. My father would have laughed at such a belief.

If this, my own true story, leaves you laughing at superstition, I hope you will never come under the spell of signs. Remember, I laughed once upon a time at the faith these turbaned Hindoos profess in signs, but I cried bitterly years later, and felt knives in my heart, after I looked through a glass at a blood-red, full moon, shedding an orange glow over the hill country of India.

For then it was that an old superstition wreaked vengeance on my scorn, and, true to the Hindoo prophecy, I saw blood before dawn—blood foreshadowed by that blood-red, full moon!

To tell this story of vengeance I must take you back to Old England, where I first began to tempt the Fate which sooner or later overtakes all women who dare deceive men, white or brown, and challenge the superstitions that belong to them.

*"I cried bitterly years later,
and felt knives in my heart,
after I looked through a glass
at a blood-red, full moon,
shedding an orange glow."*

It was summer night in the gardens of our Surrey home. For a long time there had been no sound through the night except the purring play of water in a fountain, and the occasional hum of a motor passing down Highgate Road. The stars, gleaming in the heavens like silent, fixed things, shed a silvery half-light that revealed the boy opposite me—the boy who sat in the willow garden-chair, staring at me as if his young eyes had

*"A Chap Once Said You
Were Like a
Beautiful Snake, Norah.
I Slapped the
Fellow's Face for Those
Words. I Did
Not Dream He Was So
Truthful. You
Are a Woman With*

Fangs

suddenly been turned into blue stones; as if his full, young lips had suddenly become a red line carved across his face.

He was handsome in his blonde English way, despite his momentarily enforced statuesqueness; despite his sudden evolution from passionate lover to man of granite. William Sulgrave Travers, trying to be stoic forty at impetuous twenty-three! The very thought fanned a flame of cruel triumph through my being. Billy Travers was a "romantic catch" of the late season. He had welcomed attendance from the moment of our introduction at Epsom Downs during the racing season. Many younger women of England, and legions of older ones, had envied me my handsome, subaltern escort at the recent round of social gaieties. I had gloried in their envy. But I never lost sight of the fact that he was only a third son in a family whose father was Lord—.

THE flame of triumph softened somewhat as I studied Billy's fair young face, and his width of clean shoulders which no amount of uniform could camouflage. A faint wisp of breeze wafted the perfume of Surrey roses to me. My sensation of triumph nearly melted away. For once I nearly became myself; I nearly allowed the feelings of my heart, suppressed beneath social ambitions of marriage, to have sway; I nearly reached out and drew Bill Travers into my arms, and told him I would give up moneyed George Carlyon and his high promise of imminent career, for him.

But I did not do this thing. Instead, I looked at Billy Travers with the eyes of the woman he had just come to believe me—a woman with a heart of rock, who had



Standing behind her, I waited for Chand's music to come nearer.

played with him as she had ever played with the young beautiful boys of England, too inconsequential on the road of careers to consider seriously. I could not forego the pleasure of triumph born of achieving, and then discarding him. It was the cruelty of a ruthless flair in my blood—a flair inherited from my mother who, too, had gloried in the hearts she broke.

Young Travers eyed me back, a gesture of the stoic role he was trying to play in my garden after I announced my betrothal to George Carlyon. Perhaps if he had broken there before me, I might have confessed the truth in my heart; might have given him my love regardless of engagement to another. But, I wonder. Would I not have merely felt more lust for triumph at the sight of him, a young man-god, in tears?

I remembered, sitting there in my garden, vis-a-vis to Billy, how I had sent two others away before—two others who had broken before my eyes; who had gone down on their knees, pleading their cause of love. And I remembered then, with a cool shudder, how Henry Ralston had stumbled away from me in his brand new uniform and sailed for France never to return alive. I remembered how Philip Comstock had done the same thing. Luck had been with him. He came back from war, sound. He was still my slave!

And now, William Sulgrave Travers, ordered to India with his regiment! Due to sail within two days, he was going like the others—only in silence.

I watched him rise from the willow chair and stand before me, a slim giant. His eyes were still like two blue stones. There was no hurt or hate in them. They were stones. That's all. His lips were still a red line carved across his face, only now they were not so red.

THE memory of our kiss after the levee, held by Wales at Buckingham, smote me as I arose to face him in a good-by I was sure would be silent. Once more came the mad wish to tear away my mask; to tell him our moments had not been just beautiful play on my part; to confess that no false fire had burned in my heart for him. I knew then that there was fire in my breast for Billy—fine, sweet fire such as burns only in the souls of lovers.

You will blame me for what I was, a coward afraid of the truth; afraid to give happiness and receive it. Blame me now, if you will. Blame me later, too, when you shall seemie looking through a glass at a blood-red, full moon, overshadowed by the haunting superstition that such a vision would make me look upon blood before the dawn of a new day. I deserve your blame until the end . . . until my full story is told. Then, perhaps, you will soften and forgive. But, until that time, blame me, please.

Even then I thought to ease our moment of parting. The words that might have done so were on my lips, when his own fell apart:

"Norah," he began, his voice steely in the summer night, "before I met you they warned me. I mean people who knew about you —about poor young Ralston. I met Phil Comstock one night lately. He was in his cups and free-tongued I—I had hoped and prayed you would be different with me——"

"Billy," I broke in, fearful of what else he might say, but he did not heed any interruption.

"A chap once said you were like a beautiful snake, Norah. I slapped the fellow's face for those words. I did not dream he

was so truthful. You—you may not be a snake. I cannot call you that. But you—you are a woman with—
with fangs, by gad!"

It was as if Billy himself had been a snake and stung me. A feeling of weakness overpowered me. I sank down into my chair, all sense of triumph gone. When I opened my eyes again Billy Travers was walking swiftly through the garden, toward Highgate Road. I tried to call him back. His words that had bared my true nature, that of a woman with fangs, had crushed me. I wanted to beg his forgiveness and repent in his arms, but my voice seemed trapped down in my throat.

For a long time I sat motionless and alone in our Surrey garden. The play of water in the fountain became a harsh sort of sound. The infrequent hum of motors on the road turned into an ugly noise. Still I continued trying to make believe that Billy was in his chair, and that I was not going to be cheated of the happiness of loving him.

"Billy—Billy—my darling!" I cried out at last, my



eyes seeking the stars. They had dimmed and paled somehow. Long shadows deepened on the lawn. I got up, cold and heartsore. A step and I turned toward the great country house of my father's—a house silhouetted against the eastern sky.

As my gaze traveled beyond the roof tops, a little gasp escaped my lips. A late moon was climbing into the sky, a moon as nearly orange colored as ever moons become in England. Instantly, I remember the old Hindoo superstition that shadowed the brown men of India.

Why?

I cannot say to this day, unless it was premonition such as comes strangely to human hearts at times. I hurried indoors, my thoughts mixing over Billy Travers and the idea of an orange moon shining above England. Of course, it was not the superstition that worked in my mind then. For, even if I had believed in it, the moon was not quite blood-red!

Up in my room I slipped into a rose negligee, and



"I come to ask Mem Sahib if she want me more tonight."

sought respite from my heartache in a book of poems. Again this was a move of Fate. The first poem I came upon was one that wrung my heart, making me know I had lost my "perfect hour." I shall never forget it. My eyes traveling down the page, I read:

"Give me yourself one hour; I do not crave
"For any love, or even thought, of me.
"Come as a Sultan may caress a slave
"And then forget forever, utterly.
"Come! as west winds, that passing, cool and wet,
"O'er desert places leave them fields in flower;
"And all my life, for I shall not forget,
"Will keep the fragrance of that perfect hour!"

Tears streamed down my cheeks at the second reading. A knife seemed buried in my heart of suppressed dreams. Yes, I had given William Sulgrave Travers my heart. But I had refused us both the magic of even one perfect hour. And now it was too late!

At last I drifted into troubled sleep, hurting with the harbed knowledge that it was too late. Later I waked, fitfully for a moment; but, a moment was long enough for me to see an orange moon in English skies!

* * * * *

My marriage to George Carlyon was a prominent town affair.

It was an hour of heartbreak, promising a lifetime of regret, for me. Although a year had elapsed since my parting with Billy Travers in our Surrey garden, I had not changed in my secret heart. I loved Billy even as I became the wife of another man.

After a honeymoon, we returned to London and settled for the season. At least, such was our intention. But the new ministry, which looked with much favor upon my husband, soon changed our plans. Carlyon was given a Commissioner's post in India . . . India of brown millions, superstitions, and many-faced gods! India, where somewhere in the hill country, Billy Travers officiated with his regiment.

An exaltation possessed me as I went on shipboard. A thrill shot through my veins as our steamer headed for the open sea, bearing us toward a land that echoed with temple bells. There was guilt in my eyes that first night at sea, as I dined across from Carlyon, but he did not suspect the guilt.

DAY by day we steamed deeper into the horizon of the rising sun. Night by night the stars seemed to become more like dancing points of flame above the sea. And the moon! It was no pale silvery disc over the Indian seas. It was like a rich, round orange against the vague heavens.

Calcutta!

A few days there, getting all the things we should need for our journey into the hills and settlement. And then the train rolled out of the station, headed toward Lucknow, and the vastness of India's hill country.

* * * * *

Perhaps there are English women who go to India and accept it as a matter of course, as they would moving from one town to another. Eight months of life in the hills had made me certain that India could never be home to me. I was not a mystic; not a fanatic; not interested in the things that made India picturesque to all comers.

I had never got over my suspicions of alway being watched by brown natives who went about slinking instead of walking; who seemed to drift through the fields, and in and out of houses, like lazy phantoms. I had never conquered my fear of the snakes they charmed, and made pets of. Somehow, I had never been able to hear the night sounds of the hill country without trembling . . . sounds of jackals crying; of the voices of

flying foxes; the ugly buzz of insects, and the shouting of the natives, trying to scare away animals from their crops. And the roars and screams that reached us from the jungle! Tiger and leopard voices always terrified me.

For the second time since our arrival, my husband had gone off with a hunting party. They were after big game, and quite bucked up over the report of native runners to the effect that several lions had been terrorizing villages deeper in the hills.

THE third night of his absence, Mrs. Moore, wife of the deputy-commissioner, dined with me. Her husband was also of the hunting party. All during the meal something about Chand Singh, Carlyon's head native servant whom he had left behind to help run house, annoyed me. He seemed fidgety, and inclined to move a trifle faster than was his usually slow and exasperating pace. All of this had a significance for me. It was a symptom he usually displayed just before a session of snake charming.

As Mrs. Moore and I sat smoking our cigarettes after dinner, we caught the fragrance of the Moghra trees now in full bloom. It was an intoxicating sort of perfume, more potent than that of the oleanders, hibiscus, or poppies. The Moghra fragrance cast a spell over me for the moment, and I forgot my annoyance caused by Chand at dinner.

"There is to be a relief of two companies here tomorrow," vouchsafed Mrs. Moore.

realized my excitement if the night had not suddenly filled with the sounds I dreaded. Knowing my nervousness over the night sounds, she most likely attributed my action to the mounting cries of jackals prowling beyond the village, and the chorus of native voices rising to frighten away the animals of night.

But, for once these sounds did not unnerve me. The knowledge that Billy Travers was soon to be near gave me a strength which, while a false kind, perhaps, helped me shake off the fears of the natives and animals.

My composure lasted only a few brief seconds. A shrill note from a reed instrument quivered through the house, sending a chill up and down my spine. It was Chand's native flute! The brown devil was starting to play for his snakes!

I shuddered at the sweet music that followed the shrill note—sweet music for a Hindoo to make. It was the call for his crawling poison; the invitation for them to glide around him in ecstasy, like happy serpentine children.

WHEN he plays a tarantella it will be blood curdling to watch him and his bag of snakes. Don't leave the room, Mrs. Moore," I beseeched, as she made a move for the door through which the charm music drifted. I was sure I would have hysterics if he drove his reptiles into mad frenzy.

"My dear, he controls them. There is no danger. I have become accustomed to the natives and their snakes. I would like to see what your Chand does with his collection," she answered, moving away.

A terrible sort of fascination took hold of me. I arose and followed her, my whole being trembling. Standing behind her, I waited on the threshold for Chand's music to come nearer. He was around behind the veranda. But he would come to the front, his snakes writhing behind him. He always did, the devil, because he knew how much I was afraid of them.

As we waited, my eyes took in the scene before me. Moonlight of an orange glow revealed two servants asleep on the veranda. Native fashion, they had unwound the cloth from their turbans, and wrapped it about them like a sheet. Under their heads were the frames of the turbans, being used for pillows. Somehow, the two natives, asleep in their sheets, made me think of Death. I took hold of Mrs. Moore's hand to try and steady myself, for the music was nearer now.

As a snake glided into sight around the veranda, seeming to dance as if intoxicated, the rim of a blood-red moon edged through the Indian sky. Mrs. Moore and I saw it at the same time . . . saw the blood-red moon dip below the roof of our veranda. Many times before I had looked up at the orange fire of moons above India; but never before had I seen it blood-red.

[Turn to page 80]



"Billy, dear, run into the tea-room and fetch my handkerchief."

"Really! What good news! One gets fatigued seeing the same soldier faces day in and out. What regiment is the relief from?" I asked casually.

Her answer made me start from my chair. She told me that Billy Travers' own company was one of the relieving units! I am sure Mrs. Moore would have

"Charley, lad—Charley,
I've got to tell you
something mighty hard,
old man. It's—your—"—
His voice broke, and he
couldn't go on.



I Thought I Was Much

TOO GOOD

But There Came a Day—

I WAS away at an expensive boarding-school in St. Louis when Charley Prout and his widowed mother first came to live in my little home town of Roscoe, Missouri. I was just eighteen when I met Charley at a dance in Odd Fellows' Hall, up over Proctor's Confectionery, and I knew instantly that here was another captive dragging at my chariot-wheels.

I was pleased, for now that I was home from boarding-school, all I cared about was to be popular and have lots of attention from men. Of course I would marry young, and exceedingly well, for that was the ideal program in our Southern environment. I was a *Carter*. My

position in the scheme of things was assured, and I took my place as a leader in our small set. Whatever Hallie Lou Carter did or said or wore was irreproachable, and copied by all the darkies who worked at the big yellow house on the hill.

Charley wasn't the kind of cavalier I wanted; he was short and roly-poly, and had almost a comical cast of countenance. His eyes were greenish-grey, his hair a dusty brown. My hero was a splendid six-footer, with yachts and palaces, and nothing to do but travel, and worship at my feet. He didn't seem to reside in Roscoe, though, its population consisting mainly of spinsters,



Such a changed Charley—debonair, well-tailored, and poised and smiling!

wives, children, and old married men. Agnes, my chum, was rather patronizing about her engagement to Rodney Barret. So I was glad enough to let fat, plain, poor Charley become a regular Friday evening caller. He always brought a big box of the expensive bitter chocolates that I liked, and I knew that he earned the money for them, and for hot-house roses and carnations, as a sort of office-boy clerk and utility man. I did not care. I had always been taught that it was a man's place to cater to my wishes.

Many said it was a shame the way Hallie Lou Jed that poor Prout boy on, when of course she never had the least idea of marrying him! Why, he was only a poor nobody—while she was a *Carter*!

And yet, I wasn't so much to be blamed for my insufferable vanity. I was the village idol! I taught a class in Sunday-school, and helped out at the library on Saturday afternoons. Sunday afternoons, Charley and Rod Barret would get in Rod's Ford runabout and drive around after Agnes and me. Those Sundays in the Missouri woods were glorious! We girls practised shooting the boys' rifles, with many shrieks of fear, and much necessity for a manly shoulder to lean against during the process. In autumn we carried home great

armloads of scarlet and gold leaves, and sang old Southern lullabies in the frosty dusk, on the familiar home road. The June evenings on our wide old porch, with Rod and Charley at my feet, while I twanged the strings of an old guitar, and we all "harmonized."

"Bawn and raised" in the most enchanting, sleepy, romantic, delightful place in the world—a small town down South!

The years drifted by, and still the ideal suitor failed to appear. True, on a visit to St. Louis, I did meet a handsome six-footer, and we carried on a mad flirtation during the two weeks of my visit. I came home with more airs than ever! And I took pleasure in torturing poor Charley with my hints, and the letters that I received daily for a few weeks. Evidently, then, my lover found greener fields, for I suddenly ceased to hear from him.

M EANTIME, Charley's love for me seemed to have become an actual obsession. It was changing rotund, good-natured Charley into a feverish individual who required large doses of attention to calm his restless anguish. He came Wednesday evenings also, for Friday evening there were either dances, or else Agnes and Rod drifted in, and we went out and messed up old Auntie Reynolds' none too clean kitchen, with candy-making.

His mother and his friends were constantly urging him to leave Roscoe and try his luck in St. Louis. He had been admitted to the bar, but Judge Bledsoe kept Charley on as a mere clerk at a pitifully small salary, and wouldn't listen to hints regarding a partnership.

It was becoming harder and harder to quench Charley's ardor. Even I felt secret pangs of remorseful pity when he pleaded with me to marry him and help him get his start. I never really answered outright. I only pretended embarrassment

or anger; anything to put Charley in the wrong, and to keep things between us from coming to an open break. It made me positively panicky to think of that! Mother was eternally scolding me for not getting "settled," or she was commanding me to quit giving all my youth and good looks to that worthless Prout nobody.

How could I come to any decision with such contradictory advice constantly dinned into my ears! I often wept myself to sleep at night, worrying over it, and pitying—not Charley—my spoiled little self, because there were not dozens of eligible men to choose from.

T HINGS could not go on this way forever. A conflagration will not smolder forever, even when a careful hand constantly dampens it with cold water. The crisis in my affair with Charley arrived the night that Rod and Agnes were married. It was June, and I was just twenty-one. Charley had given me a wonderful amethyst ring in an old-fashioned setting of hammered gold. Rod let it out that Charley had been working until midnight, for weeks, to get enough money to buy it. I laughed and pouted, and wore it on my plump little first finger . . . and with tears in his honest eyes, Charley said that I looked like an exquisite, old-

fashioned miniature come to life . . .

Rodney and Agnes were so happy it hurt me to watch them together. Rod was skinny and stoop-shouldered, but he had a brand new haberdashery of his own, and was doing very well, indeed. Aggie was only too glad to be rid forever of the wearing grind of teaching the first graders. She was in stiff satin, with a long white veil, but Aggie wasn't pretty, and I couldn't help but overhear when everybody whispered how much more beautiful Hallie Lou was. I had on a pink tulle frock, and a wreath of pink rosebuds around my head.

Their train left at nine, and the whole crowd was down at the station to see them off. Charley and I, as best man and maid of honor, rode with them thirty miles to the next stop. But we were invisible so far as the bride and groom were concerned. They had eyes and ears and hearts only for each other. And their tender smiles and lovelit glances made my heart throb wildly, with a sentiment I had never before known. I felt disturbed and somehow cheated. To have missed . . . to be missing . . . such wonderful happiness! I felt that Life was treating one of her fairest daughters in shabby fashion.

Charley and I waited in the little station for the local train to take us back home. He tried to hold my hands as we sat outside in the scented June night . . . to draw me close. But I was afraid. And so I frantically protected myself by complaining that I was very tired. Dear, unselfish Charley was all tender solicitude, at once. He took me home and kissed me at the door, saying that he would call tomorrow night, as usual.

I DRESSED for his coming the following evening, in a little blue mull frock that he especially admired. I felt a strain in the air when I came down the stairs and greeted him as he sat glumly, fingering the piano keys, instead of standing in the doorway and watching my every step with an adoring hunger. Suddenly he sat down on the small divan, thrust the fat, satin cushions aside, and pulled me almost roughly to the space beside him. I seized a book in desperate haste, and began turning pages at random, pointing out the pictures. But he snatched it from me and slammed it back upon the old marble-topped table.

"Hallie Lou, honey!" he said hoarsely. "How much longer are you goin' to keep me in this hell of torment for you?"

I looked down, trying to think what to say, but my heart was beating hard with fear and another emotion. I was never nearer giving in to Charley, and yet I almost hated and despised him because he wasn't good enough for me. Fat, plain, old Charley, that the town loved and laughed at! They always made Charley the goat—pressed him into service as decorator, speech-maker, toast-master, pall-bearer . . . on all occasions, when every one else refused to officiate. He was the favorite butt for all Hallowe'en and April Fool's Day jokes! He was the town's beloved buffoon, and when Charley chose



And the tall, fair girl at his side! I was about to plead illness, and ask to be taken home, when . . .

to "cut up," on the dance floor, or at parties, the whole town held its sides and yelled with laughter. I was too silly a little snob to see that this raillery only cloaked a genuine love of Charley. I imagined because nobody took him seriously that he was not worthy of respect. And now, he was insisting that I give myself to him in marriage!

Suddenly he seized me roughly. "Lou!" he pleaded, and even I caught the terrible yearning in his thick, tortured voice. "When, oh, when, for God's sake, are you goin' to marry me?" His husky voice almost broke into a sob. He gripped his big, homely hands over my soft white ones, and held me until I winced. I was frightened—he breathed so heavily and looked at me so strangely, his face distorted, his lips unsteady.

"I—why, Charley—I haven't—haven't ever given you to understand that, have I?" I tried to move away from him, lightly.

"Yes," he choked, in that thick breathless way that made my heart pound. "What else do you mean? It's been three years since I started coming here, and I've got a right to know. Seeing Rod and Aggie, yesterday, sure of each other . . . together . . . at last . . . I can't stand it any longer, honey. I've got to know!"

I looked at his bowed head. I watched a tear trickle through the cracks between his fingers—the fingers that had slaved at the most menial tasks to buy me gifts—and I knew how much I liked him. If he were only more nearly worthy! I was literally dying to be married. To me that was the end and aim of a girl's existence. But I couldn't take Charley, and forever relinquish all chance to win a more desirable husband.

The silence continued. Suddenly he turned and seized me, not gently, but with a rough, hungry strength that

took a checked blue-and-white handkerchief from his pocket, blew his nose loudly and unromantically, and then slouched over to stand before me in contrite attitude.

I was furiously angry, almost angry enough to have reached out and thrust my pointed pink nails into his face. Deep down, I knew I had been about to admit . . . with all the generous abandon of my temperament. The fact that he had let me go just at the psychological moment made me hate him and myself both. "You'd best go," I commanded, and waved toward the front door.

I FORGOT myself," groaned Charley. "I was a brute. I had no right to use you that way. Say you forgive me, honey? Don't send me off this way! Let's be friends, anyway, Hallie Lou," he begged, hacking toward the doorway.

"Please just go!" I commanded. I was half relieved, half beside myself with baffled longing, when he took up his shabby grey cap and slouched out without another word.

I had never known such a stormy mood as this action of his left me in. True enough, Charley had only left me as I asked. But, if he had only seized and mastered me, he might have settled the vexing question of our marriage, then and there. As it was, I flew upstairs, slammed into my room and tore up a dozen articles with snatching, clawing fingers. I stamped until the old chandelier below rattled, and then I threw myself across my bed and wept so violently that Mother heard me, got out of bed, and came in to see what was the matter.

"Oh, why did you teach me to think I was too good for any ordinary mortal! Why couldn't I be like Agnes—content to settle down with my lover, even if he is poor and homely! I hate life! Oh, I wish I could leave this hateful little town and never see it again!" I raved hysterically, sobbing and storming, while Mother chafed my hands and scolded and promised impossible things, just as

she had promised me toys and candy, when I was tiny.

It was two whole months before I saw Charley again. The town heard of the quarrel immediately, and the favorite theory was that Charley had got himself disgracefully drunk at Rod Barret's wedding, and had gone to Hallie Lou's in a disgracefully intoxicated condition. These town gossips were more than half right, only it was the wine of love that had inflamed Charley's placid nature to the boiling-point.

Charley was the kind of adult boy who fancies himself possessed of the acme of reserve and dignity, but in reality, he babbled his heart-break broadcast to anyone who would listen. "The boys" took him aside and consoled with him and bought him a [Turn to page 116]



Their train left at nine, and the whole crowd was down at the station to see them off.

did not permit of a struggle, and over and over he kissed me . . . kissed my dark hair until it fell about my shoulders . . . kissed my lips . . . my neck . . . I felt his tears on my cheeks . . . the taste of them upon my lips . . . the subtle intoxicating scent of the lover for his sweetheart smote my nostrils and stole away resistance, with his glamorous sweetness. The first black anger was succeeded by a sense of rest and peace against which I fought, only to sink into its depths with a sigh of delight.

Ice melted in my heart and flame-leaped instead. I turned and my arms rose to cling in answering straining pressure. Just then, Charley abruptly released me, strode to the piano, and reached for his cap. He turned around,

They Keep Us Guessing

MARIE PREVOST has traveled a long hard road since she left her old comedy parts. In the leading role of her new picture, "Recompense," she is making an unusually fine impression.



ILLENE RAY is scor-
ing again in "Swanson
Silver," a production which
centers around the South
Sea Islands with their ro-
mantic charm.



"Confessions of a Queen,"
is the startling title of
ALICE TERRY'S
newest picture. It is one
of those stories which give
her an excellent opportunity to display her talent.

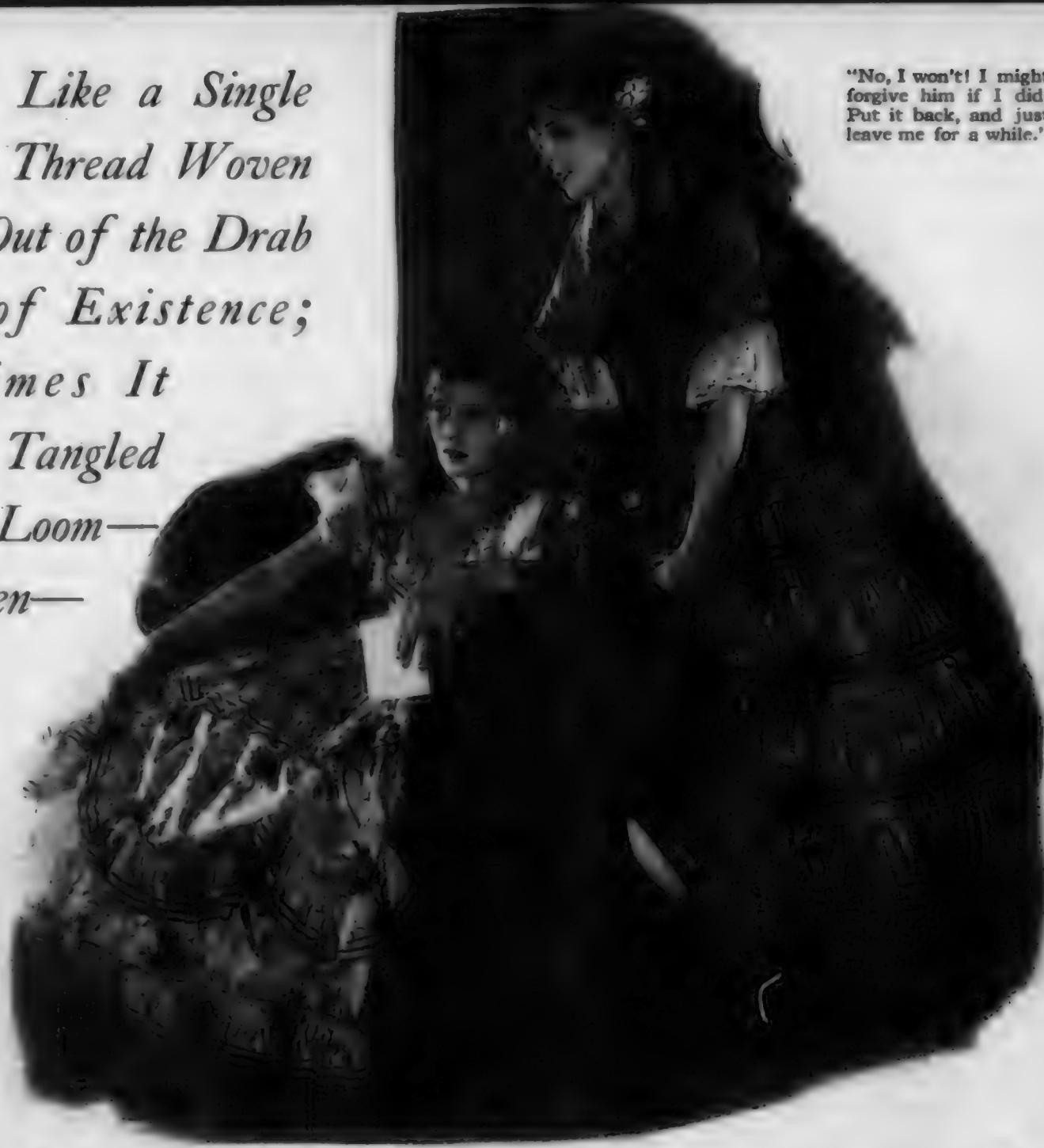


Zander
J. A. R.
H. H.
Carding
Co. Inc.
1916

1916
1916
1916
1916
1916
1916

*Life Is Like a Single
Crimson Thread Woven
In and Out of the Drab
Woof of Existence;
Sometimes It
Becomes Tangled
on the Loom—
and Then—*

"No, I won't! I might
forgive him if I did.
Put it back, and just
leave me for a while."



All She Wanted

I AM an old lady, and I never tried to tell a story before in my life. But I have just seen the final chapter of a sweet, sad love story, so full of interest for young and old that I am going to try to put down here just the way it happened.

The characters are just plain, common folks, like myself—and, to think, there are people who have the idea that nothing ever happens to such common people. But, at least, they were real people and this is a true story.

The last time I saw Sarah Perkins was when I spent the afternoon with her at the Old Ladies Home. I cannot remember the first time I saw Sallie, for we were childhood playmates in Charles City, the small Iowa town where we were born. The closest of chums, through all our young years, we shared the intimate secrets of girl days and young womanhood, and until I married and moved out of the state there was nothing I did not know of her life. After that, even though I lost track of her,

as women are apt to do when the paths of life diverge, I thought of her frequently and fondly, always supposing that she had married Davie Towner, and picturing her as a happy wife and a proud mother.

Imagine my surprise, one day last year, to recognize Sallie's face among the old ladies in our church home in Des Moines, when I went there to call, with some of the other members of our Aid Society. We went over on Mothers' Day with some flowers and candy, and as I was passing around the parlor I thought I saw a familiar face. We both stared, and then we threw our arms around each other's neck, and kissed and cried. Right away, I looked at her third finger to see the gold band, but it was bare. Of course I never asked any questions, for I consider some places too sacred for even the oldest of friends to intrude, but I always wondered why her romance didn't ripen to maturity, as every one anticipated, and as they themselves expected.



Always cheery, with a word of encouragement to the afflicted—that was the life of "Auntie Perkins."

I went to see Sallie regularly each week after that day, and although we discussed old times freely and she told me all about the financial reverses that had resulted in her application for entrance to the Home, she carefully refrained from talk about her broken engagement with Davie. I remembered, to be sure, that they had a falling out just before I moved away, but I presumed it was merely a lovers' quarrel, soon to be made up with a kiss. Several times, during our visits, we mentioned his name, for we could not very well recall the home-town and the home-folks without including him in the conversation. Although she smiled wistfully, at each mention of his name, she never said more than this: "Poor Davie! He was such a good boy; but oh, so proud and stubborn!"

AT THAT I smiled, for pride and stubbornness were the nearest kin to faults that could be pinned to Sallie Perkins' character. A mighty sweet little woman, and as good as gold, but with the pride of Lucifer himself!

Sallie Perkins was the prettiest girl attending that little church on the corner, among the maples. Everybody loved her. Wherever she went she was the leader of all the life and fun. She never was frivolous, even by the standards of those sober days. For all her beauty and popularity among young people, she was never spoiled. She had no ambitious desire for a career, nor for

worldly success; all she wanted was to love and to be loved, and to make every one around her happy.

Sallie lived alone with her mother, Widow Perkins, as she had always been called in our town since her husband fell in one of the early battles of the Civil War. Theirs was a modest little home of white frame, with a fence and gate and yellow roses and big purple lilacs blooming in the early summer, and later, honeysuckle, bleeding-hearts, Sweet William, and pinks. From our earliest days, when we started to Primary, and went to birthday parties, played "Post Office," and all the rest,

it was known that Davie Towner was "sweet" on Sallie Perkins. They had been playmates since the days of pinwafes and kilts. As they went along through the grammar school grades, always rivals for the highest marks, he became known as her "beau." Even at Sunday-school picnics his plate was placed beside hers.

IT SEEKS only yesterday that Sallie came running over to our house, across the street, to confide what had taken place the night before. She was all blushes and flutterings. On the way home from prayer-meeting, she said, Davie had put his arm around her waist and asked her to be his wife. "And he kissed me, too," she told me; "and it was different from any of the kisses I've ever had, at games, or sleigh-rides. This was so serious, so manly, and, oh, so determined. I can't explain it, but it made me feel all grown-up and womanly, and I knew right away that I wanted to be his wife—for always."

I was so glad to be the first to know of her joy, besides her mother, and I kissed her and wished her the greatest of happiness. Then we discussed the virtues of young Davie, and my own sweetheart, after the manner of young girls in love. You see, I was engaged at that time, too, and I felt free to

advise my chum regarding the mysterious delights of being betrothed.

They were both so young, with so many years ahead of them before they could marry, that it was decided wise not to reveal their engagement at that time. In a few weeks Davie left her to attend the Theological Seminary—for to Sallie's great joy he had decided to study for the ministry—and after his absence I could see that Sallie had changed from the carefree girl of the previous year. She was carrying the secret of their betrothal with mature pride.

Then came lonely days. Nearly every afternoon she would slip over to our house, hiding some needlework in a small parcel. There we would sit, by the kitchen range or beside the hard coal burner in the front room, sewing on pretties for ourselves and our homes. When I recall the plain, practical, heavy garments of those bygone days and compare them to the crepe and silk flimsies of today's trousseaux, I sometimes wonder if it wouldn't be more fun to be a bride in these days when sheer attractiveness is rated higher than long wearing qualities. Be that as it may, Sallie and I thought the products of our needles were quite the most beautiful creations that any engaged girls had ever possessed, and we dreamed dreams of love while we sat with one hand on the needle and the other in Mother's cookie jar. And oh, how thankful I am to record that mine have all come true! How empty my life would be to look back upon,

if it had not been for the ever comforting companionship of the man who has remained my lover through more than a half century of marriage.

AS MY chum and I sat through those winter afternoons, working with needle, crochet hook, and tatting shuttle, we talked over every phase of the destinies that lay ahead. In her dream, it was the church parsonage she visioned. There she would always help Davie, cheering and sustaining him in his difficult work. For in the country preacher's life, in the early days of Iowa, many hard things taxed the courage and faith of man and woman. Many a clergyman's wife earned at least two jeweled, heavenly crowns.

All this Sallie faced with eager loyalty. Often she hummed as her needle flew, and she counted the passing days of the calendar. Soon her sweetheart would be through college. Then would be the day, as he promised, that all their world should know he had chosen her for his wife.

The months at the Seminary had improved Davie, both in looks and manners, and no wonder that Sallie gazed at him with open-faced adoration, whenever they were seen together. She did not come over to sew as frequently now, for she spent many of her free hours with him; but when we did have moments to exchange intimate confidences I could see how completely love had absorbed her. Her face was positively radiant on all

occasions and Davie, himself, went around with a most non-ministerial whistle.

April had come to Iowa. In May, Sarah and David were to be married, and all the town began making preparations for the wedding. Presents were to be selected: many new dresses to be made. To David had come the surprising joy of assignment in our own church, and he was even now living by himself, "batching it" as we called it, in the renovated parsonage.

Sallie was in a flutter all the time and her mother seemed only slightly less excited at the anticipation of her daughter's splendid marriage. Many small parties were planned in their honor, but most important of all was the "sociable" at the church, to be given by the Ladies' Guild for the young minister and his bride-to-be.

How we all had worked getting the dress ready for that occasion! After consultation with our mothers, we had decided upon pink albatross for Sallie's dress, and gray cashmere for Mrs. Perkins. And how we had studied and restudied the pages of the fashion sheets of our day—borrowed from the town's most expensive dressmaker—before we had dared put scissors to the beautiful materials!

WHEN Sallie tried hers on for the final adjustment of ripples and folds, how her face did reflect its hue of rose!

Sallie had made me promise to [Turn to page 86]

At eleven o'clock Uncle John fell asleep, and I took from his rigid hands the gun that had held us captive.





So He Called Me Skyline

Then the ride across the
moonlit waters of the
lower harbor of Staten
Island.

HOW far will a woman go for the man she loves? All the long length of hell. That's how far. I know.

Yet, if it were given me all to choose once more, I would travel again each step of that torturesome path for the joy of the love that was mine.

But let me go back to the beginning and tell my story just as it happened.

* * * * *

It was the dream-time of day. I leaned back against the rough logs of the cabin and gazed down the narrow valley. The sun had long ago disappeared behind the high, red-brown walls of the canyons and the Colorado evening shadows were beginning to play strange tricks with the jagged rocks outlined sharply against rose and orange clouds.

I spread out the piece of paper in my hand. In spite of its worn state and the waning light, I could still make out that skyline, every inch of which I could see with my eyes closed—as it looked in the Sunday supplement.

That huge flat mass of buildings at the end of the island with the towers rising beyond them! The Singer Building, Clayton had called that softly rounded one. That pyramid of stone was the Bankers' Trust. That one, the highest of them all, rising exquisitely slender

against the sky, the Woolworth Tower. I knew them all by heart.

Again I looked down the valley.

That great, upstanding rock at the river's sharp bend—the Sentinel I had always heard it called. But as its hard red and brown softened to purple against the paling sky, I recognized it as the Woolworth Tower. And in the Pyramid I saw the Bankers' Trust, while the curving mound of the beehive became the Singer Building.

Then, as all the browns and reds blended in the fading light into dusky blues, my dream towers rose ever more clear and vivid. The rush of the swift river over its rocky bed down behind the barn became the distant roar of the city, that indefinable sound from which Clayton said no one ever escaped in Manhattan.

MAGIC island of marvelous New York! How I longed to see it for myself!

I was so completely absorbed in my dreams that I did not notice the man who slid from his saddle and dropped the reins over his horse's head at the side of the cabin.

"Hello, Annie," he called.

I was surprised to find myself irritated at that slight bow of his knees. I had never noticed it before. Why should it bother me now? Then it came to me that I had never seen knees without that slight bend till Clayton

Annie

*And Just
Because
I Loved
Him I
Believed
In Him.
Then Bob
Came Back—*



had come. What had come over me of late?

"Hello, Bob," I answered, hastening to fold the newspaper picture away from sight.

"Lookin' at that again?" he finally asked, tilting the chair he had taken against the cabin wall.

"Yes," I answered.

I felt a slight flush on my cheeks and knew he was watching me uneasily.

I could hardly remember the time when I had not been conscious of the eager hunger in Bob's eyes whenever he looked at me. There was that old look in them now. Ever since I had been old enough to think about such things, I had felt him watching me. I had believed that I cared; I had been sure my heart beat a little faster at his step, at his voice—until Clayton had come into our valley.

"Got fancy new names for all our old rocks?" he asked. I sensed the sharp edge he tried to keep off his voice.

Shyly I looked up at him. He seemed to be fighting his way straight through the depths of my eyes to the heart really back of them. Only a few weeks ago I had been sure it was all for him. But now . . .

"Some of them," I answered. Then apparently for the sheer joy of watching me he sat back and listened while

"You're goin' back with me to Aunt Cissie, Annie. She'll be awful proud to hear about him—"

I named them over. Suddenly I felt myself flushing.

"You think it's silly?" I stopped to ask. And the hot color seemed to leave my face.

"I never thought anything you ever done was silly, Annie," he said slowly.

I must have felt something of the desire in his eyes, for I turned from my skyline, half-frightened.

"Annie," he said, bringing his chair abruptly down on its four legs and drawing it close to my own. He reached for one of my hands.

"You was eighteen yesterday, Annie, and—Annie, you must know what I been waitin' all these years to tell you, ever since you was a little kid and I used to lift you up on the saddle with me. I'm only twenty-nine, Annie; that's not so awful old, it is? And I'm just plain crazy 'bout you, Annie.

"Oh, Annie, I know you love me! I know you do!" Even his own ears must have detected the note of fear as he repeated the words, for he hurried on. "You will

marry me, won't you, Annie? I've waited so long and I've watched you, Annie."

"Don't, Bob! Please don't," I cried. "I can't bear—" I brushed a sleeve across my eyes without finishing my words.

"You mean you don't love me?" he asked in a flat, dull voice.

"That's what makes it so hard," I answered with a little catch in my throat. "I love you so much. But—not that way."

YOU mean it's him—that Clayton fellow that's been out here the last month fillin' you up on New York and his big ideas?" he finally asked. He let go my hand, while he watched the telltale flush rise to my cheeks.

"Annie, you're not—engaged?" The words choked in his throat.

I nodded without meeting his eye.

"Does your Aunt Cissie know?" he asked.

"Not yet. I'm 'fraid she'll feel bad at my leaving her, so I wasn't going to tell her till we were ready to go. Clayton thought it would keep her from worrying 'bout it beforehand."

"Maybe," answered Bob doubtfully. "But she'd sure want to know long enough ahead to make a cake and get some things ready for the weddin'."

"Oh, we're not going to be married here!" I answered quickly. "We're going to the Springs. Clayton knows a fine minister there."

"The Springs preacher can't be no finer than the Reverend down the valley. I'll fetch him up and you have your weddin' right here at home, Annie," he replied.

"I'm not sure Clayton would like it that way," I said doubtfully.

"I am," he answered firmly. "Maybe that's him comin' up the road now. I'm goin' that way and I'll just tell him 'bout my gettin' the Reverend."

Then when I still seemed unconvinced, he added, "That's sure the way Aunt Cissie'd like to have it, Annie."

"You think so?" I asked; then added tremulously, "Oh, Bob, you will be good to Aunt Cissie and take care of her, won't you? You are the only folks I've got."

"Sure I will," he answered and cleared his throat. "Don't you go be thinkin' now 'bout gettin' homesick. You know Aunt Cissie and Bob'll always be talkin' 'bout you and writin' you. Maybe sometime we might even come visit you. Aunt Cissie'd sure have a great time in New York. Guess I'd better be goin' along. Only don't forget what I told you, Annie, he added earnestly, as he placed his broad hands on my shoulders and turned me toward him. "I'm just plain crazy 'bout you and always will be."

"I'll remember," I said softly.

"Good-night, Annie. You'll kiss me, Annie, won't you, like you always done all your life?"

I am sure he tried not to let what he had said make any difference on his part. But in spite of his efforts, I felt his hands tighten their hold on my shoulders. I

looked up at him. I wondered how I ever could have thought the wonderful something that I felt in my heart had been growing for him. A fleeting second—then the thought of my strange new love swept over me.

With the same straight look he had known from babyhood I kissed him.

* * * * *

New York was wonderful! And how wonderful it seemed to a girl like me, who had never before been outside her home valley! Still more marvelous was the joy of those first weeks that burned with a happiness so great that it hurts even now to think of it! How completely we belonged to each other, Clayton and I! How entirely one we were!

He found great delight in taking me about, and showing me the rushing, hurrying crowds, the roaring subway, all the life of the city so strangely new to me. Home from the office as fast as he could come evenings, and back at the last moment mornings! Every minute away from his Annie was just so much lost from life, he always said. And how I poured out my heart to him in complete adoration!

On sultry nights we would ride down to the Battery on the rear seat of an open street car. Then, as it rattled on through the deserted blocks of lower Broadway, I would reach over with a little shiver of delight to whisper in his ear, as I looked up at the dark walls towering above us on either side.

"Like the valley between the canyons at home, isn't it?"

Then the ride across the moonlit waters of the lower harbor to Staten Island! We always stood at the forward end of the ferry coming back, for I never tired of watching the skyline.

In those late night hours, with all the great office buildings of lower Manhattan dark and deserted, how unbelievably like the old towering rocks at home it was! A lump always came in my throat as I watched

that skyline, for I always saw in it the sharply rising Pyramid, the gently curving Beehive of far-off Colorado. There at the Battery was the old Indian trail up the canyon back of the cabin. Above, in the sky's dusky canopy, the same bright stars hung out their blinking lights. Even old Sentinel stood guard over all.

And as the deep rumbling voice of the city called out to us from the nearing shore . . . if I closed my eyes I felt I could run right down to the river behind the barn. Surely, I heard Aunt Cissie calling. Dear Aunt Cissie!

AND here I always felt Clayton's hand close on mine. And as he smiled down into my eyes, the valley with its towering walls would fade away into the towers of Manhattan. And as I gazed at their powerful beauty, I would name the huge buildings over.

Deliriously, unbelievably perfect were those first weeks!

Then came the Saturday night when as a special



"Lookin' at that again?" he finally asked. I felt a slight flush on my cheeks and knew he was watching me uneasily.

treat he took me to an Italian restaurant. How my heart beat with the fun of it all! The crude paintings on the rough brick walls, the tree growing strangely up through the roof, the women daintily blowing smoke from their cigarettes, the sweezy, squeaky orchestra—and cheese in the soup! Yards and yards of spaghetti! Then, as a crowning innovation, wine was served in heavy old coffee cups.

To a girl, raised on a diet of ham and "sunny-side-up," varied with slabs cut from a quarter of beef mellowed on a limb of the big tree reaching out over the cool river behind the barn, this was a strange and wonderful feast.

How I laughed at my young husband's earnestness when he leaned across the table before tasting his wine and asked:

"You're sure you don't mind my having this with my dinner, Annie?"

"Looks like everybody else is having some. It must be the thing to do, all right," I whispered.

"That's not what I mean, dear. You've not forgotten what I told you before we were married, have you, Skyline Annie?" he asked, with that caress of voice on his favorite name for me to which I always thrilled. "How I took the cure once?"

"I've not forgotten," I replied quickly; "I don't believe

I've forgotten anything you ever told me. What of it?"

"It was three years ago and I've never even wanted any since. I'd never have asked you to marry me, if I had. You know that, don't you, Skyline Annie?" he asked. "You know I'd never hurt you, don't you, dear?"

There was a strange note of pleading in his voice as he reached for my hand under the table d'hote damask.

BUT if you're sure you don't mind," he continued. "A dinner like this isn't much without red ink."

"I'm sure," I replied.

"Four weeks!" he whispered.

"Our wedding was lovely," I murmured.

He looked long and deep into my eyes before he let go my hand and finally spoke.

"I've always been glad we were married out there with Aunt Cissie like we did," he said.

"Instead of at the Springs?" I asked.

"I'm afraid it might not have been the same—at the Springs," he replied. He looked at me as if he could never see enough of the love in my face before he continued. "Four weeks my Skyline Annie's been mine! Four weeks nearer heaven than I thought I'd ever get." Then he raised his glass. "Here's to our anniversary."

With love and trust in his eyes he drank to the day.

On the way home we stopped at a [Turn to page 113]

So Many Girls Have Written

Shall I

That We Believe It Has Become

I AM not foolish enough to imagine for an instant that the problem with which I am wrestling just now is confined to myself. I suppose that at this very moment thousands of other young girls are trying to solve the same difficulty. Unfortunately, we women are far too reticent and hypocritical among ourselves with respect to such vital topics.

I have appealed to my married sister. I have even tried to find out how my vivacious "kid" sister is solving the problem for herself. But all in vain. The only conclusion that I have reached so far is that I will have to make my own decision before Bob calls again. Perhaps his call will be the last. It has occurred to me that a frank discussion of my trouble may enable me to make up my mind and may help other girls who find themselves similarly situated.

I am twenty-two years old and I say it with frank regret, still single. Outwardly, I guess I look very much like other girls. Maybe I am good-looking. I know I have a good figure and that I am at least as attractive as the average girl. I keep up with the styles and wear the very best clothes that I can afford. My stockings, for instance, cost me six dollars a pair. The slippers I am wearing now cost me fifteen dollars.

Yes, I am very much up-to-date, except in one respect: I don't "pet." I don't allow fellows to get familiar with me, even on extended acquaintance. Perhaps I am making a mistake. That is the point I am trying to determine just now.

Since I was fourteen I have had more fellows than I can conveniently remember. One by one they have all strayed away. Oh, yes, they fell for me at first quickly enough. Perhaps it was my six-dollar silk stockings and the other pretty things I wear. Perhaps it was the way I wore them. Anyhow, I have no complaint to make about getting acquainted with and making a good first impression on members of the other sex.

I never have been able to keep a fellow—that is, one who amounted to anything, and one I wanted to keep. Things go very well until we begin to get well acquainted, and then, well, I am thrown aside for some reckless little "petter" who can't compare with me in looks or anything else worth while.

It may be that I am a born old maid. Or perhaps I am a coward at heart and am afraid to take a chance. It isn't that I'm cold-blooded, or anything of the kind. On the contrary, I think I am rather a passionate type. Much of my trouble is probably due to the fact that I have lived with my grandmother since I was a little five-year old tot. Grandmother is a widow and was lonesome, so mother let her have me to keep her company.

My grandmother is a wonderful woman. I love her dearly. But she is a dyed-in-the-wool stickler for old-fashioned things. When I was growing up, she took the greatest of pains to impress on my plastic consciousness the axiom that men never marry girls with whom they can get familiar. And so I grew up to have a horrible dread of becoming any man's plaything.

I don't want anyone to get the idea that I am a Puritan. Far from it. I like to dance, am not averse to an occasional little kiss or hug with the right person, and could never be called bashful. But, goodness knows, there's a lot of difference between an innocent little kiss and the prolonged "petting"—which seems to stamp a modern girl as "a good sport." Holding true to the ideals which my grandmother has taught me, I have never competed with these girls who are in every sense thoroughly modern.

Theoretically, a girl like myself is supposed to win the undying respect and love of every right-thinking man who comes her way. It sounds well enough, but it doesn't work out. I am proud to say that I am not small-minded enough to brand all the fellows who have attempted intimacy with me as worthless, or even

"I never have been able to keep a fellow—that is, one who amounted to anything, and one I wanted to keep."

"Things go very well until we begin to get acquainted, and then, well, I am thrown aside for some reckless little 'petter' who can't compare with me in looks or anything else worth while."

About This Problem

“Pet”?

Serious

“Irma, how in the world do you manage to keep all these boys so crazy over you?”

“What’s the idea? Jealous?”

immoral. I realize that men are human and that a pretty girl is a temptation.

On the other hand, girls who play with fire are supposed to get so horribly disfigured by it that their lives are ruined. Yet, I know ever so many girls who have secured good husbands by acting positively “wild.” Some of these same girls have taken fellows away from me. What could I do? The same as they were doing? Yes, but I shrink from forsaking my ideals, and so, while I am still single and rather miserable right now, these girls have good husbands, little babies, and nice homes. So much for my old-fashioned ideals!

I REALIZE that I am getting older every day, that my chances of marrying happily are dwindling with the passing hours. And so I have decided that it is about time for me to do something. I know that if I persist in being a ‘stick’ I will lose Bob. I love Bob with my heart and soul. If he goes, I do not know how I can ever hope to be happy again. At the same time, I do not want to make a mistake which can never be corrected. If I only had a confidant, a close friend, things would be so much easier for me, but I have always kept very much to myself. Oh, yes, I have plenty of girl friends but none to whom I can go for advice in my present quandary.

I visited my married sister a few days ago.

“You’re happy with Jim, aren’t you, Dorothy?” I asked her.

She looked at me as if I were crazy.

“Silly, of course I am,” she said with a yawn, stretching out lazily in her comfortable chair and putting the magazine she had been reading aside. “Trying to kid me?”

“No,” I replied. “I just thought I wanted to know.”

“Well,” she said in a matter-of-fact way, “you didn’t have to ask me. Just use your eyes. Take a look at my new fur coat and then help me eat a few of these chocolates Jim brought home last night. Draw your own conclusions. What’s the matter? Do I look over-worked?”

One careless glance at my sister was enough to assure the most skeptical that she was far from that. Poor Dorothy! Work would have done her good. But Jim wouldn’t allow her to lift her hand. She might hurt herself or get tired. And here she was, stretched out in her deeply upholstered lounging chair, going rapidly into plumpness. Dot was actually developing a double chin. As for happiness, she was satiated with it. No, my sister wasn’t getting wrinkles.

“Just how familiar were you and Jim before you were married?” was my next rather poorly phrased question.

For a moment she eyed me blankly, as if she did not believe her ears. Then she sprang to her feet with an agility of which I would not have deemed her capable and faced me with mingled anger and seeming apprehension in every feature.

“Who’s been talking?” she demanded hotly. “What have you heard? I don’t see how [Turn to page 102]



How I Found the HOUSE

A FOREIGN port on the coast of China is the most unnatural thing on earth. Laid out with a generosity which the Oriental never allows himself, it seems to offer in the general aspect of its western architecture and its wide and cleanly streets, the security of the familiar in a foreign land. But native quarters press it on all sides, teeming with dark and tempestuous life; sights and sounds and smells hang over it, forever alien and strangely disquieting to the Occidental; yellow men and black and brown rub elbows with white on its streets. Most of all, it is unnatural in its vast preponderance of white men over white women. Into one of the black and subterranean currents which some argue are necessary to nourish this transplanted civilization of ours, I was plunged abruptly in Hong-Kong, in the year 1918, and in it I was nearly lost.

I was nineteen at the time, and was by no means as inexperienced and ignorant of life as my years would normally imply. Women, foreign as well as native, mature early in the Orient. I had danced and sung in public in most of the large cities, all the way from Tokio to Sydney, ever since I was sixteen. I knew something about white slavery in that part of the world; knew that the grim details which the incredulous are always so anxious to make light of, are in fact grim and horrible. Vice, both expensive and cheap, flourishes in the Orient like a plant in tropical heat, and since white girls are rare, they are imported from other more profitable fields of recruiting—from Paris and Vienna and South America; from New York and San Francisco—girls both cheap and expensive. An international trade, the machinery for which runs on greased wheels, it is yet true that the unwary and the innocent are sometimes caught in its cogs.

It was five to six days to Hong-Kong, and the cloudless skies and long smooth swell of the Pacific were unspeakably monotonous. There were few passengers on board, and among them I found only two to be congenial companions. Miss Waldon was a girl perhaps five or six years older than I, and much more austere in temperament. She affected a severity in dress which amused me, and which I incidentally felt served as a foil for my more inconsequential gaities. We walked a good deal together on deck, chiefly after sun-down, and her conversation was frank and as sensible as she looked. She was traveling alone, and was eventually joining a brother in Tientsin. Various associates and friends of his were meeting her along the way and giving her a good time.

THE second person, also a woman, was much more sophisticated and wordly, and at the same time fitted my mood much better. Mrs. Bell was quite old enough to be my mother; was, in fact, she said, the mother of five daughters, but in her attitude to younger women there was curiously little of the maternal. She was tall, with a fair and very beautiful complexion and large dark eyes; but the feature which gave her marked distinction, was her snow-white hair. In my eyes she had a little of the glamour of a lady who had stepped down out of that most indulgent and perverted court of Madame de Pompadour, where the freshest faces were framed in hair as luxuriant and as white as hers. We seemed to be mutually attracted to each other; we chatted and laughed a great deal; we exchanged anecdotes of our experiences in the East. She told me she had been married three



I think I told you that I had been

times and was just come from visiting one of her daughters in Manila; three more lived at home with her in Hong-Kong.

The time passed pleasantly then, thanks to these two, and the day came at last when we sailed into the harbor of Hong-Kong.

Mrs. Bell and I, with our bags and wraps piled on the deck behind us, stood together at the rail, watching our approach to that singularly beautiful city. Against the bleak hills of the island, and flanked by the dark huddle of native quarters, it blossomed in strata upon strata of gleaming white buildings, feathering out at the top in the detached villas and tropical gardens of the "Peak," the English summer residence section. The rainy season was just over and the green was rank and lush.

in KOWLOON



married three times," Mrs. Bell explained. "These girls are half-sisters."

Dingy trawlers, spic and span ocean-steamers, coast-wise vessels of all sizes and descriptions, were anchored in the channel. Flat, square-nosed sampans clung like leaches to our sides as we made our way slowly through the myriad of tiny craft that poled and scurried around the water-front. And before us, above the amazing congestion of docks and piers and jetties on the narrow strip of the "Praya," the town rose precipitously, dazzling in the sunshine. I had seen it before, but it never lost its wonder and beauty for me.

Mrs. Bell asked if I was expecting friends to meet me. I told her that I wasn't, and then amused myself scanning the faces of the few foreigners who had gathered to meet the boat, thinking to pick out for myself at least one of her daughters—I was certain that any child of so

striking a looking person as Mrs. Bell, would bear her some resemblance. There was no one, however, who even remotely fitted the case, as I at last told her, a little plaintive at my own stupidity. She gave me a quick look and then laughed, explaining that she had left Manila quite suddenly at the last, a week earlier than she expected, so that no one knew that she was coming. She was looking forward to surprising them at home.

We parted on the dock with all the manifestations of affection which such a sudden and concentrated intimacy often produces, and it was understood that I was to lunch with her in a few days at her home, and to meet her daughters. Miss Waldon and I put her and her luggage into a rickshaw and waited till she turned at the corner of the street to wave us a last good-bye. Then,

*Behind
Those
Massive
Doors Lay
Mystery
and
Charm
and
Luxury.
But These
Were
Masks—*



There were animal heads on the wall . . . and all the time the four white faces at the table watched me.

in our own rickshaws, we started in the opposite direction for our hotel

Two days after my arrival I danced at my hotel—an entertainment given at the expense of the United States Government and there I picked up the man I had been sent to "get." After that my days were full of engagements for lunch and tea and dinner, while I won his confidence. It is not always interesting, the detective game. A mere operator rarely knows either the beginnings or the endings of his cases. I knew no more about this man than that he had aroused our Government's suspicions. Whether he carried information valuable to the enemy—and to us—by word of mouth or in writing, or whether he carried it at all, was for me to find out.

OBVIOUSLY I was very busy. Mrs. Bell telephoned me frequently, but I could only chat, and postpone from day to day the time when I could lunch with her. We had our little joke over my inaccessibility, she saying she was not used to paying court so assiduously to a young lady who turned a deaf ear in her direction, in favor of mere theatrical and cabaret managers—which was the excuse I gave for my continued preoccupation. Twice she sent me flowers from her greenhouse, snapdragon and larkspur as fine as any I have ever seen, and on one occasion a bunch of black Hamburg grapes. She was most cordial and I must own that I was really a little flattered by her attentions. She never left me her telephone number, always taking upon herself the initiative of calling me up

So pleasant and considerable an impression did Mrs. Bell make upon me that several times in the interim between landing and the day when I finally lunched with her, I inquired of various friends whom I ran across, if they knew her. But as there seemed to be several families of that name in the city, and I did not know the initials or address of Mrs. Bell, I never seemed to hit upon mutual acquaintances.

AND then at last I got what I came for: some information about the shipping of jute out of a Chinese port—a seemingly unimportant affair unless one remembered that jute bags, filled with sand, were the fortifications raised against each other by the armies of a world then at war. I forwarded the information to my chief, and nothing remained but to keep the man's confidence, and to keep him on the spot till action could be taken. In the meantime I decided I could afford to take the greater part of a day for a purely social engagement, and accepted Mrs. Bell's invitation. The time was set for one o'clock, and I suggested that I bring Miss Waldon with me; she was leaving the next day for the north. Mrs. Bell professed herself delighted and then, for the first time, gave me her address. Her house was quite at the other end of the town, not as I had pictured it to myself, on the "Peak," but in the suburban district known as Kowloon. She told me to allow as much as thirty minutes to get there.

Miss Waldon was out just then. At twelve-thirty, when I was leaving, I tried her room again. She had

come in, but I found that she had an engagement to lunch with a young man, a friend of her brother's.

"Then come up for coffee with us at two o'clock," I suggested. "Bring him along!"

She agreed to this and I jotted down the address for her on a scrap of paper and saw her slip it into a purse. Then I called a taxi and departed.

The heat was terrific. Even in the usual Chinese coast town, summer is bad enough, and if possible one keeps to the house through the noon hours. Hong-Kong is in a class by itself, and in the weeks following the rainfall the humidity is unspeakably awful. Here was I, setting out for half an hour's ride in the very middle of the day—but there was nothing for it but to open my parasol and endure it as best I could! The streets in the commercial section near the hotel were comparatively empty, and at first we drove rapidly; but even so, I could see the drops of perspiration start out on the neck of my Chinese driver, under his ridiculous foreign cap, and trickle slowly down under his blue coat collar.

In a few minutes, from the open streets and familiar cleanliness, we dropped down across a corner of the Chinese town. Here we had to move slowly, and I got

my handkerchief to my nose and prayed that our way might not lie for long through that evil and tortuous street, through the congestion and the stench. Men and women and children crowded us on all sides; my ears were full of their flowing linguals and my nose of their thick, nauseating smells. But it was only for a moment and we were out again, on the long smooth boulevard to Kowloon, where there were no people and the air was sweet. The bamboos cast a feathery and futile shade along the edge of the road, and the sun beat mercilessly upon it. I sat back, closing my eyes against the glare, and began to realize how tired I was and how strenuous the past two weeks had been. Fatigue with me means a sudden depression of spirits and, in the course of time, a headache. I was sorry I had accepted this invitation, but it was too late to turn back.

We stopped at last before a great house set back behind a tall clipped hedge. I paid my driver and went up the walk, which was flanked with giant oleanders in marble steps, and rang the bell. Everything about a large [Turn the place was on to page 78]

The young man who had come with Miss Waldon stood by the door. My strength was almost gone.





I spoke a little word now and then. No, I wasn't going out.

*He Used to Go to School
With Me! Used to
Pull My Hair, and Carry
My Books—and
Steal My Pie. Now He
Was Talking About a
Lavender Bound Book*

My Old

SOMETIMES when I cannot believe it is really I who have this story to remember, I need only go into the living-room and look at the tabouret where our telephone stands; there is a long scratch on the polished mahogany wood.

I am almost thirty now, and have been married six years. Perhaps you would not call me pretty, and I've never thought I was, myself, but in the town where I was a girl I always had plenty of beaus. We lived in a small town in Ohio, and our house, like all the others on Main Street, stands in a garden of old-fashioned flowers, with a long lawn coming down to the very pavement. I was just the sort of sheltered, care-free girl you would expect to find laughing on the broad, shaded porch, or helping my mother in the big, prim rooms—waiting for the day when I'd marry, and have a home of my own exactly like the one I would leave.

About marriage itself, and about life, I knew nothing. I'd read a little in books, and in the Literary Club, and seen the movies that came our way, but I think I was no different from most girls. I thought of the things in books and the things on the stage as having nothing whatever to do with real life. I knew only that now I was content, and that in time something called "marrying" would come to me.

Because most of the boys in our town had gone away to try their luck in big cities, there was after awhile at our parties the same small group of men in the midst of the same large circle of girls.

But one of the masculine minority singled me out.

Then, in due time, Oliver asked me to come to the big house where he and his father lived alone, and to be its mistress and his wife. I knew I was lucky; I ought to be happy.

I was happy—happy as the day was long. I loved my new home, and Oliver's funny ways. I do not think anyone could have spent four years that were dearer to remember than those first four years of my married life.

To be sure, Oliver and I had no children. And I had found that marriage wasn't quite what I had thought it would be. It wasn't a lovely burning glow, with your heart beating all day long in a sort of rhapsody. It was the good steady trudging along of things that went well, of a house pleasant and warm, and the increasing realization day by day that Oliver was a fine man—not stingy, like some of the husbands of women I knew; not cranky, as even my own father had been sometimes. He was from the beginning a truly model husband.

IT TOOK me a little while to find that Oliver didn't like demonstrativeness, as he called it. And, though I had always been a gay and laughing girl, he did not like me to be so as a wife. When I'd been a little girl I used to play with the small boys all the time, and even at high school I was a tomboy. I was a romantic tomboy, though, like most of the girls of my sort. I think I felt everything more intensely than the others did; that I had to run faster, laugh more joyously, dance more quickly, to express this inner spur that made me move always with expectation and wonder.



Elmer would look at Oliver lying frail and thin in his chair, and then he would look at me and smile.

Friend

I'd come to my marriage with this wonder and this dancing joyousness. But Oliver was different. He'd always been quiet and sedate to my dancing ways. He's a bit older than I. He's tall, but not very robust, and I am small, but have never been ill a day in my life. I found that it was more than dignity which made Oliver so quiet, so sedate. I learned that too much movement, too much expression of affection, even, wearied Oliver and that he did not really like it.

Gradually our marriage came to follow a sort of rule. I made it a point not to break that rule. If Oliver sometimes caressed me in one of his rare and gentle moods, I was gentle also. But I repressed my own affection for him; I never let him feel I was asking for his. If other women had met this same sort of situation I didn't know, for of course I never spoke of it. I thought that as a dignified married woman I was rather vulgar to have been so exuberant, so full of vivid life, and then I acted more quietly with Oliver. I also became sedate and restrained, so far as I could manage. Oliver kissed me softly one evening and told me I'd grown up at last.

Then one evening he came home to tell me some news. He had an offer to go into partnership with a firm in Detroit. It meant heaps of money—success.

Did I weep at this news, and plead with him not to leave the town and the house where we were so happy? Well, I did burst out crying, but with excitement and delight. The city! It didn't seem possible.

How much more than my wildest dreams the city enchanted me! Oliver and I moved to a little apartment

out on Boston Boulevard. I had always done my own cooking, as every respectable married woman in our little town at home does. And here there was no cooking to do at all, except to make pretty frivolous breakfasts, or suppers, if I wished.

Oliver was so busy that sometimes we hardly kissed in the mornings, and did not see one another until late in the evening. I spent the days at theatres, shops, and in the marvel of sights from street-cars and buses.

AFTER awhile, though, I became rather forlorn. It was lovely to see things, even to walk down-town and look in the windows. But alone, half the fun was gone. Oliver took me to a theatre once or twice. And we invariably had supper together, no matter at what hour he came home—sometimes not before midnight. Oliver was pretty tired then, and he'd yawn, sit silently munching sandwiches, and then he'd say: "Well, it's bedtime, dear. Going to retire, or are you reading a while?" When I'd come in he would be lying fast asleep, worn out.

I was pretty lonely. I turned to our "address book," and looked up friends in Detroit. It is funny about friends. When they come to the home town everyone is so delighted to see them, all excited about their coming back, and all thrilled at the thought of seeing them. But when folks from home visit them in the city, it is so different. Not that they aren't glad to see you. Not that, to me, they weren't sweet, and friendly, and interested. But they were, oh, so busy.

In our home town the visit of someone from the city was one of the big things; in the city my coming to see an old friend had to be crowded into a life already full and thrilling. But one of my friends had time for me—Dotty King, who was in the advertising business. I saw her often.

One day I called on her, and in the vestibule someone looked at me, and looked again. Then the stranger—it was a man—said, "Why, how do you do, Tres!"

TO HAVE someone, a stranger in Detroit, call me by my given name was odd enough, but to pronounce it as they did at home was astonishing. I stared. I saw a broad-shouldered, young man, tall, not good-looking but rather impressive in a vital, vivid sort of way; he was well-dressed and had smiling keen eyes.

His eyes laughed at the surprise in my own. "Don't you know Elmer? Elmer Bradley?" he asked.

Elmer Bradley! He used to go to school with me! Used to pull my hair, and carry my books, and steal my pie at noon! He was my playmate at home, and my beau later in high school. "Tomboy Tres and Ellie Bradlev" had been a team of terror as youngsters. Elmer had gone to Chicago as a reporter, doing something very exciting on a newspaper during the war. And his folks said he'd written a play. His sister, Hattie, said he'd been engaged, or something.

It certainly was Elmer, though, grown so tall and big, and looking so interesting. It was funny, and I held his hand when he grabbed mine, and just stood and laughed, and talked and talked. He explained that he'd come to Detroit to get "another point of view," forget what he'd done, and plan a new work.

"And to think I found a little face from long ago,

Oliver is so awkward and stiff in the kitchen, so strange, that it made me laugh to see Elmer.



first thing," he smiled, holding my hands lightly in his. It was lovely to find myself with someone who was just like a brother. But it was not comfortable to see that the elevator boy was looking at Elmer holding my hands in the vestibule of Dot King's fashionable apartment hotel. I pulled my fingers away, and when I did, Elmer smiled a little, a curious smile that made it seem as if my drawing my hand away meant something deliberate, something more than appeared. I blushed.

I have never flirted, and I surely had no intention to do so with Elmer. He was just like a brother, a younger brother, too, for I was eight months and a week older than he! So I smiled a little, too, and said, with some spirit, "How big you have grown, Elmer! And to think I used to feel years older than you when you thought you had a crush on me at high school! Remember?"

But he said nothing.

Somehow that embarrassed me, especially his straight look right into my eyes, with his little smile at the end. I said, rather lamely, "Did you come to see Dot King, too?"

His smile came then, white and ready. "Good old Dot! Yes, I've seen her every time I came to Detroit. I have a note from her to be here today."

But no one answered her bell when we rang. And then the elevator boy told us Miss King was called away for a little while, but had asked that if anyone called that they please wait. So we sat down on the deep red sofa in the vestibule, and waited. It seemed public to me, coming from our small town. But Elmer sat there as if he were in his own parlor above his dad's drug-store, talking, listening, smiling.

YOU'RE married, then?" he asked. And then he added with that odd little smile of his: "You don't look married yet, Tres."

It made me laugh, but I flushed, too. It sounded strange to say.

Then he began to speak about his work.
[Turn to page 84]



"Because I am longing for the day when we can all live in a house together," I answered.

Maria's Story

*She Wanted to Laugh; There Had Been Such
a Long Time When She Didn't Know How*

AND we shall go to America to make our fortune!" can never be erased from my memory of Italy and my young husband. And we had come with highest hopes of his success as a musician.

Those first three years! Our dreams of a baby Silvio and a baby Maria came true. But a dreadful disease so impaired my husband's chance for success that we had to live a life of drudgery. At last, he was taken to a hospital and the children were taken to a Home. I was left with a kind neighbor. Another baby was coming.

After weeks of intense suffering my husband died.

It was through John Street, a fellow countryman, that Silvio was given a decent burial.

My baby was a girl. Though I was given very tender care at the hospital, I was reminded of my responsibility as soon as I recovered. The two children in the Home, and the baby to care for! Just when I couldn't see a way to manage it all, a call came from a wealthy family, wanting to adopt my baby. It was for her sake that I finally consented. They took her away.

Part II.

HOW long I lay there I do not know. I didn't cry. I was like a poor beaten animal.

"Now, Mrs. Guidi," said the sister

I looked up. There was a baby in her arms. But it wasn't mine. No one could ever have deceived me about my baby.

Why this baby?

"We would like you to nurse this baby, Mrs. Guidi," said the sister. "Her mother died, and she's not doing very well on the bottle."

She laid the baby down by me. I put my arms around

on Fifth Avenue where I was to take my new position.

My duties kept me busy. The baby was sweet and dear. I grew very fond of him. And he grew and developed into a healthy baby.

THE father and mother were so delighted that they gave me five dollars for every ounce he gained.

I was feeding another's child! But I tried not to be bitter when I thought of my own darling baby. I can't tell all that I suffered during that year. Each time I would take that baby in my arms I would close my eyes and dream it was mine.

I got through it some way. And how kind those people were to me! They got me an assistant nurse so that I would not become fatigued. They seemed so grateful to me, for when I went to that house the baby was a weak sickly little thing. But when I left at the end of a year he was a fine strapping fellow.

It was not easy—the parting when I left there. I loved the baby and the young mother loved me, and depended on me.

I was ready to leave. They were waiting for me in the sitting-room. Of course they were very rich people, but sometimes that does not make such people realize just what happiness they can give in life. But this dear young lady and gentleman did.

When I shook hands with them, the young mother threw her arms around me, and kissed me.

Then the father shook hands with me and put an envelope into my hand and said:

"Here, Maria, this will keep you going for a while. We are very grateful to you."

I brushed away a tear, thanked him, and went right straight to the Home where my children were. When I was waiting for them—and could anything be more wonderful than to be able to spend a whole day with them?—I opened the envelope.

There was a check for a thousand dollars. I almost fainted as I held it in my trembling fingers.

"This will keep you going for a time."

I inwardly thanked God for my blessings. I was happy!

This was the first time in several years that I was able to spend a whole day with my children, and as I saw them come down the stairs in their freshly starched dresses and their little faces shining like two new silver dollars, my heart nearly burst with joy. When I felt their arms around my neck, tears of happiness flowed freely.

Life was straightening out for me—but even with this dawn of security a leaden feeling came over me as I thought of that dear little soul who had come into my



And in my trunk was Silvio's violin. Perhaps some day my little Silvio might play it.

it and a comfort came to me in having even someone else's baby in my arms. Poor little motherless soul! It helped me to nurse that baby.

Then the sisters planned for me. They arranged that I could go out for a year as a wet-nurse. In doing that, I would have good care, comfort, good food, and make high wages. This would give me an opportunity to get on my feet and plan for the future.

The children were happy. The first day I left the hospital I went to see them—on my way to the big house



"When I'm a man, Mama,
I'm going to drive a street-car,
and every day I'll take you for
a ride, and we'll live in a house
all together."

life and then left so shortly. "For her sake!" I kept saying.

I swallowed quickly and simply made the tears keep from falling from my eyes. Here was my life now with those two other dear children of Silvio's and mine.

IT WAS a beautiful spring day, and as I walked up the street to the corner to wait for the horse-car to take us up to the old Seventh Street Park, where I had planned for our outing—with a little hand in each of mine and hundreds of questions being hurled at me each minute—I laughed for the first time since Silvio had died.

I laughed—a real laugh. I couldn't believe the sound when I heard it.

We got on the front seat of the horse-car, and what a wonderful time we had, jogging up town! I can hear the tinkle on the horses now, and the heavy clapping of their hoofs on the uneven cobble-stones. Soon we were seated on a grassy knoll, on the bank of a little pond.

"When I'm a man, Mama, I'm going to drive a street-car," declared my little Silvio, "and every day I'll take you for a ride, and we'll live in a house all together."

That's was I wanted to do—to live in a house all together. The next thing was how to manage.

We reached the park and I sat down on a bench. Silvio, of course, was perpetual motion. This was a great experience for him—to go on such a long expedition and on a street-car. He explored every nook and corner around us. But every once in a while he ran back, threw himself on my breast and hugged me with his strong little arms.

But my little Maria. She was different. She snuggled up on my lap and seemed perfectly happy just to be with me. Even with Maria's curly head on my shoulder there was another little head I wanted there, too. I must get over this, I determined.

WE ATE our lunch at a nearby restaurant and then went out into the sunshine of the park again. This was the very first time that I had time to sit down quietly and take stock of my life and decide on my next move.

I didn't want to bother the good people whose house I had just left, and, after all, they had provided against disaster for me. Besides the thousand dollars which the young father had so generously given me, I had managed to save most of my wages. I had had no expense because

my mistress had dressed me for my work and had fitted me out with her dresses, which had scarcely been worn.

My trunk had been sent to my old neighbor's—to her of the artificial flowers. And with my trunk Silvio's violin. Perhaps some day my little Silvio might play it. I was planning to spend the night with her and remain until I got settled.

Tomorrow I would go to the savings bank and deposit my newly acquired fortune and then look around.

But where would I look? Be a nurse? That was about all I knew: how to care for babies.

Babies! Again my own precious lamb that I hardly knew came into my mind. Why, she would be walking now. Perhaps she could form a word. I wondered what her name was. Just think, I had a dear little baby girl and I didn't even know her name.

Was she all right? Were they kind to her? Oh, surely no one could be anything but kind to a [Turn to page 93]



I felt that I was in a safe harbor after a perilous journey

Opening Tonight The Great "Alvie" *In The Rover* At the Cameo Theatre



His coming was announced on a spacious bill-board.

IT MAY be hard to believe, but it is a fact that my Aunt Matey never went to a movie until last winter when she came to the city to visit me and Helen, my wife. Not that Meadowville is so benighted that they don't own a picture house, but Auntie never indulged.

When she went with us to see "Alvie" she got an eyefull, for Aunty solved a mystery that had been puzzling her for thirty years—she learned something about her missing husband, and the young girl cousin who had disappeared at the same time. Some women would have fainted, but not Aunt Matey. She didn't even mention it until we got home.

"Know who that young feller in the picture was, the one who did all the loving and kissing?" she asked me.

"You mean the hero of the play? Why, that was Alvin Renault, the most popular male star before the public!" I told her. "His rise has been simply phenomenal, and his salary is phenomenal, also."

"He deserves it, though, the dear!" my wife said. "I think he is just wonderful!"

My better half is usually quite a sensible person, but Alvin Renault makes her talk like a silly, little flapper.

Aunt Matey paid no attention to her remark. "His name may be Alvin—I'm not disputing that—but it ain't Renault; in fact I don't know as he has any right to the name of Smithers, either, but, seeing he's Ab Smithers' son, it's the name he ought to have."

"You do not mean—your husband?" we chorused.

"Sure do! That wonderful male star whose rise has been so phenomenal is the offspring of my husband, Abner Smithers, and the woman he left me for, and I'm

the one who ought to know." She spoke very deliberately. That which we had feared might happen to lonely old Aunt Matey had come to pass: she had lost her reason!

She guessed what was in our minds and laughed: "No: I'm not insane," she assured us. "What I am telling you is the gospel truth, and likely if I'd been in the habit of going to the movies I'd have found it out long ago. Ab and Lily must have settled down somewhere, and probably raised a family, and this young picture actor is one of their kids. Soon as my eyes rested on him, I knew he was Abner's boy. Looks exactly like my husband did years ago when folks used to say he was the handsomest man in the county. It was all I could do to keep from hollering out, and asking him where in time he had been keeping himself."

"But," argued Helen, "a resemblance does not prove anything, and this young man's parents are French—at least his father is."

"French, your eye!" snorted Aunt Matey. "His father's father was an Irish emigrant, and his mother's father was a Swede."

"Even if you are so positive about his being the son of your husband, how can you be so sure that his mother is your cousin Lily?"

"Well, naturally, seeing they ran away together I might suspect it," replied Aunt Matey dryly. "And different expressions, such as the look on his face when he was coaxing the old lady in the play for money, made me think of Lily when she got around me with her wheedling ways; and when he was angry, haven't I seen those very expressions, such as the look on his face when he couldn't have his own way? The boy looks *most* like his father, though, even to his legs. I can't exactly tell

you know it was that Abner's long legs looked different from any other man's legs, but it's a fact they did seem to have a look of their own. When that actor came on the screen tonight, I would have known him if his head and face had been all covered up—just by his legs, and the way he walked.

Aunt Matey settled back in the big chair, closed her eyes and seemed to forget us. I wondered what thoughts were passing through her mind—grim, gritty old lady that she always has been.

After a minute she jumped up, exclaiming: "Long past my bed time. We'll talk more about this tomorrow, and I'll make my plans."

"You aren't thinking of revenge at this late day, are you, Aunty?" I asked.

Aunt Matey regarded me sternly. "Young man," she said, "don't interfere in what don't concern you, and remember this: I was mightily wronged thirty years ago. The trial leading to those who wronged me has been a long, long one, but, thank heaven, I can begin to see where

it ends." She bade us good-night and closed the door.

"She evidently means business," I said dolefully to my wife as we prepared for bed, "and there is no telling what she will do. For thirty years she has gone about in her queer, quiet way, and she probably has it all planned out. Aunt Matey never cried or talked about her troubles, but she did a lot of thinking, and if Abner Smithers and Lily Morris are still alive they are due to get theirs. If ever a woman got a dirty deal it was Aunt Matey!"

"I know she did," agreed my wife, "but I should think by this time she would be willing to forget. Just think how terrible it will be if she goes out there, or wherever they are, and—and—shoots them!"

"Sure would be great publicity for their son, Alvin," I said.

I was thinking of that long ago time. It was in 1893, World Fair year, that Aunt Matey's domestic tragedy occurred, and I remembered all the details well, though I was only a youngster of eight years. It had been the same old story—the husband tiring of the wife, and falling in love with the beautiful cousin to whom Aunt

Matey had given a home. During the heated discussions that took place after the elopement I remember hearing my mother say: "If they had just taken their worthless selves away it wouldn't have been quite so bad, but here they have robbed poor Matey of everything. Lily even took some of her best table-cloths and pieces of fancy work!"

"And they are saying that Ab took all the cash. Did he?" somebody would inquire.

"Yes, indeed, every cent of the five thousand dollars that they got for the farm! Matey slaved and scrimped for ten years, and now those two have taken everything and left her with only her hands to make a living with!"

I learned later that Abner Smithers in his youth was considered the handsomest, most talented young man in town. That he didn't like to work wasn't held against him because he was such "good company"; hence, when he chose for his wife plain little Matey Jones everybody was astonished. A few years after the marriage, however, public opinion changed, and people wondered why busy, sensible Matey put up with such a lazy, good-for-nothing husband, though they usually added to their criticism. "But he is so good-hearted, and such an entertaining fellow!"

DURING the first year of their marriage Aunt Matey and her husband bought a small farm adjoining the village, the first payment being made with money earned by her as seamstress. If Abner had worked as he



"I've been a long time finding you folks, and I'm mighty glad I'm through with the search."

should, it would not have taken long to finish paying for it, but he was, as always, "a good fellow," and spent most of his time proving it. When a singer, a fiddler, or merely a master of ceremonies was needed, Abner was right there; but when milking time came, or the pigs got in the corn, it was Aunt Matey that was on the job. Besides working like a slave inside and outside of the house, Aunty was village dressmaker. But she was determined that their home should be paid for, and didn't seem to mind the work.

One of my earliest recollections is going to Aunt Matey's and looking at the red plush photograph album. The most interesting part was that devoted to little Benjamin Smithers, Aunt Matey's one and only child. He had died when he was five years old, and from the time he was three weeks old when his long skirts swept the floor until the week before he died, Aunt Matey had his picture taken every six months. The next to the last one showed him in "kilted skirts"—they kept them little girls longer in those days—and in the last one he wore

There must have been a narrow streak of good in the man, for he, too, had valued the old-fashioned book which contained the pictures of the little son who had died.

his first trousers, with a white waist which had an immense ruffled collar and cuffs to match.

"Aunty must have liked her little boy, else she wouldn't have had his picture taken so much," I remarked once to my mother, after a visit, adding: "But I should think she would talk about him once in a while."

"Aunt Matey isn't the kind that talks much," Mother replied.

FINALLY, after the little farm was all paid for, Abner succeeded in convincing his wife that he was becoming interested in raising and breeding cattle, and persuaded her to sell out, so that they could buy a larger place. They received five thousand dollars, a very good price at that time. This included all the livestock. As so many banks were failing that summer, Abner suggested that they keep the money in the house and that they would invest it in another farm right away. But first he insisted that Matey should take a vacation.

"A week at the Fair will do you a world of good, and while you are gone Lily and I will get everything packed up ready to move," he assured her.

He kept his word about that at least, for he and Lil packed everything they could carry away in trunks, even taking, as Mother said, Aunt Matey's "fancy work." Gone too was the money, even to a little tin savings-bank in which Aunty kept nickels and dimes.

The little woman seemed the least excited of any one, and quietly and uncomplainingly took up her work again. She went out sewing by the day when there was work of that kind to do, but those were the hard-time years, and quite often she was glad to get work of any kind—washing, scrubbing, and paper hanging. Once in a while she secured a job as nurse. As the years went on, and times got better, she obtained more nursing jobs, and gradually managed to save a little money which she shrewdly invested in wild land. Aunt Matey was a good business woman, as was shown by her selling the timber from her land for a big price, and later selling the land for three times what she paid for it. She always invested her money well; hence, after thirty years she again owned a little home, and was comfortably independent, though far from rich. She would have had more money if she had not spent so much trying to find Abner. Nobody understood why she was so persistent—whether it was love or hate that urged her on, but she made no secret of the fact that she had often hired detectives.

"Just think," my wife said the next morning as we waited for Aunt Matey to join us at breakfast, "if that awful story about 'Alvie's' parents should get out he would be ruined."

"I should worry about handsome 'Alvie' and his career!" I snapped. "But I do hope Aunty won't kick up *too* big'a racket."

The door opened, and the one we were discussing came in smiling. In her arms she carried a number of late movie magazines.

"Look through these, will you, Jack, when you have time, and read the articles I have marked," she [Turn to page 106]



One
Evening
Come
When
Came
the
a Light
Burning in



I picked up a vase and hurled it at her. There was a shot.

What I Learned

I THINK perhaps the maternal instinct was born in me. We were poor, but I had seven dolls when I was four years old. I have two of those dolls yet. The other five were my own handiwork, odd pieces of unbleached muslin stuffed with cotton, with vague little faces crudely drawn with bits of charcoal.

I was the youngest of a family of nine girls, and yet I'm sure Mother had the same welcome for me when I was born that she did for Elvira, my oldest sister. And Mother even adopted my little cousin, Ted, when a harsh Dakota winter swept away Aunt Libby. Little Ted made exactly ten!

We were a happy family, and poor Dad never complained. He worked long hours every day in the threshing season as "separator man," and when the threshing season was over, he filled in as a freight brakeman on the Chicago & Northwestern Railway, which ran through our little South Dakota town.

I cannot call Dad by name in this story, but even here I want him to have a sort of anonymous glory, like the Unknown Soldier, for he fought bravely for us through those blistering Dakota summers and harsh winters.

Anyone who has had a kind, sacrificing father may partly - never fully - realize my feelings the night that Mother received the telegram from Fort Pierre. Dad had slipped from the icy roof of a cattle-car. Our happy days had started to crumble. We Prescotts would have to fight it out alone now.

Father had been the oldest brakeman employed on that division, and the best liked—so much so that the railroad company paid us eight thousand dollars without a law-suit at all. Dad's trainmen insurance brought the total up to about ten thousand.

But this suddenly acquired wealth was poor balm for the humble Prescott family. Mother died less than a year later. "Heart," the doctor said. A *broken heart* was our opinion. She and Dad had been sweethearts always.

I did not believe that I could pass another Christmas in those surroundings. Elvira, who had been married for some time, wanted me to come to Sioux Falls and live with her. Another married sister who lived on a farm a few miles from Huron would also have been glad to take me in. But I had my mind set on New York, where Aunt Libby's oldest daughter, Ruth, was doing rather well. She had written me that she had a position for me, and said to come on at once.

MY ADOPTED brother, Ted, had turned out to be a studious boy. Shortly before I left I saw him off for the State University at Vermilion, on Dad's insurance money.

Perhaps, I dreamed, among those millions of men in the great city to which I was going—perhaps . . .

Ruth was at the station to greet me. We had made full arrangements by letter. "You will not recognize me,

*Autumn
Joe Didn't
Home.
Arline
From
Cabaret
Was Still
My Room—*



She finally tore herself free and came back with a revolver.

From ARLINE

of course," she had written, "but don't worry—we'll find each other. I'll be standing right in front of the news-stand at the Grand Central Station. Carry your smallest bag with you; we can have the other junk sent later."

BUT surely this glittering creature in front of the news-stand could not be Ruth. I had remembered her as a little urchin with wispy brown hair. And this modishly-dressed lady with the squirrel coat, who waited in front of the news-stand had auburn ringlets.

However, brown-haired urchins, it seems, may grow into various types. It was Ruth, all right. I guess I was a little shocked. Bobbed hair was an exception in those days. Somehow, we didn't think it was quite respectable. But a great deal of water has passed under the bridge since that gray fall day.

If I was shocked at my cousin's bobbed and hennaed hair, I was still more puzzled later that evening. I learned that Ruth had changed her name to Arline, and was singing in a cabaret, starting to work at nine o'clock at night and not getting home until two in the morning.

Whatever faults Ruth—or Arline—may have had, she had a warm heart, and was honestly glad to see me. She had made arrangements for us to share a big parlor of an old-fashioned house on West Twenty-first Street. A lacquered screen in the corner divided the room so that we had a little kitchenette with a gas-plate, and there was festive. Even John Locke, who dabbled in short

Somewhat the atmosphere was not what my girlish fancy had visioned it back in South Dakota. But I forgot everything gloomy in the joy of my first position. For, realizing how fond I was of children, Arline had secured me a job in the "infant bazar" of a large department store. The department manager dropped in occasionally at the cabaret where Arline was singing, and she had spoken for me.

Those were days of paradise for me. I had a chance to fondle babies, to handle little teething-bands and soft little garments of eider-down. Christmas was not far away, and I'd ask the little kiddies what they wanted Santa Claus to bring them, and watch their eyes grow large and bright with the promise of Wonderland. I was crazy about the position. I would have worked for nothing just to be there, if I could have afforded it. And when, a few weeks later, we put in the toys for the holiday season, the basement resounded with the delighted prattle of children and the excited squeals of boys over a new mechanical toy, or the appearance of our store Santa Claus.

OUR manager, who knew Arline, was very kind to me. He came down to our drab little West Side home on Christmas Eve, with presents for Arline and me. Mrs. Wolfe, who ran the boarding-house, also dropped in with her two little grandchildren. The air was festive. Even John Locke, who dabbled in short

story writing, dropped in. A wood fire danced high in the old-fashioned fireplace, and John had brought down his portable victrola and some records for dancing.

For Arline was too wise. It was not long before I realized she was living in a dangerous atmosphere. She accepted presents from men, and often as I returned from the store at six in the evening, the little hall telephone would be ringing. Some man would be on the other end, inviting Arline out to dinner. I have never been narrow-minded. There was morality in my little South Dakota home, but the spirit of tolerance was also there. I believed there was the making of a good woman



Joe and I would stand on the little balcony and talk . . .

in Arline, but that she'd have to be guided occasionally in such a way that she would hardly be aware of it. She never resented my little pieces of advice, although she would frequently "kid" me out of them.

"You watch your own step, May," she told me, laughingly, one night. "I'm not blind. I notice Joe Whitney is hanging around a lot."

And this was true. The mellow spring nights had come, and after we had gone to a movie show, Joe and I would stand on the little balcony and talk, not aware of the goings-on around us. He had taken a room on the top floor a few weeks before, and his smile had rather attracted me. He told me he worked in an uptown machine shop, although I had noticed that his hands were white and well-kept, and he seemed to have a great deal of spare time to himself. We talked and talked those balmy spring nights, and gradually Joe learned all about me—where I came from, Dad's tragic death, my share of the insurance and compensation money, and about everything. I was learning to care for him a great deal, and I often allowed him to kiss me. He seemed neither better nor worse than the boys I had known in high school back in South Dakota, but his personality sort of charmed me.

JOE was sufficiently keen to see that I was not simple enough to be lured into anything wrong. After a few weeks of courtship, his methods changed. He began to talk of marriage. He was a good-looking chap, a brilliant talker, and seemed so fond of Mrs. Wolfe's little grandchildren. I fell deeply in love with him, and told him I would marry him on condition that he get a steadier job. I was practically alone in the world. I wanted a husband to protect me, and a home, and little kiddies playing about the house. I told Joe frankly that I had enough money to furnish a home, and he said he would work regularly and also save; then we would get married and move over to a little house on the outskirts of Brooklyn. I meant every word I said. If Joe had been as sincere, I am sure we would have been very happy.

Not that he didn't seem to do as he agreed. He was very anxious to marry me. He got up every morning about eight o'clock and would be gone for the day. I thought then that he was away at his work.

I had a new interest now. I looked at the happy young mothers shopping in our infant bazar, and dreamed of soon becoming one of them. I guess Joe was aware of this. He called for me at the store one evening and we went out and dined and danced, then rode down to Twenty-first Street on top of a Fifth Avenue bus, and he pleaded with me to marry him right away, and well, it was a psychological setting and a psychological moment. I said I would.

John Locke and Arline stood up for us; we were married next day in the rectory of the Little Church Around the Corner.

A cloak model who had taken a little room in another part of the big house paired up with Arline, and Joe and I took a two-room apartment right over them. We planned to start housekeeping the first of October. Rents would be a little lower then, Joe told me. I kept on working.

THOSE days with the kiddies at the store and those long evenings with Joe kept me perfectly happy, and it wasn't long before I knew I had reached the harbor of happiness. The shining goal I had set for myself was in sight. I was to know the joys and cares of motherhood.

Then one autumn evening Joe failed to come home. When Arline came in from the cabaret at two o'clock, there was still a light in my little apartment, and she came up and tapped on the door.

"What's the idea of staying up?" she was asking through the door. "Haven't the love-birds gone to roost for the night yet?"

"Why," I told her, "Joe hasn't come home. He took an hour off from the shop this afternoon, and we went out to buy the new furniture. He went back to make up the hour, but he expected to be home about seven. I hope he wasn't struck by a taxicab or something."

There was a cynical gleam in Arline's gray eyes. She came over and put her arms around me.

"May," she said, "don't be mad at me for asking this. How much money of yours did Joe have with him?"

I felt weak. I stood up, trying to be indignant, and then flopped back into my chair.

"Arline!" I said. "What in the world can you be ——"

But she patted my arm and interrupted me.

"May, dear," she said, grimly, "if Joe ever comes back, don't say anything about what I've told you. I'm not a trouble-maker—and there's no use making unnecessary enemies. But, girlie, I've been in this village a little longer than you have, and I've met different kinds of men. I suppose it's because I'm different from you. You're the mother type, and I—well," she added, with some hidden meaning in her tones, "girls like me might become mothers, too, but we're not looking for any heirs. Now, May, just hold yourself in. Maybe Joe'll come back, but I know men—men of Joe's type. It's partly my fault that you got married at all, but I didn't want to be a wet-blanket, and I'm not going to pull any 'I told you so's' now. Maybe he'll come back, but I doubt it. Joe wanted you, without marriage if possible, but with marriage if necessary. And he wanted your money. Try not to feel too hurt, May, for it's a tough battle for a girl in this town and you may as well realize it now as later, and if he doesn't come back you're better off without him. How much money did he take?"

There was a lump in my throat. My face was wet with tears. Arline put her arms around me and I sobbed on her shoulder.

"Oh, don't ask me now, Arline," I sobbed. "You mean all right, I know, but you're such a suspicious person. Oh, I'm sure he's coming back. Why, we picked out a nice French-grey bedroom set today, and Joe said he just loved it."

"But did he pay for the bedroom set?" asked the practical Arline.

"I—I don't think so," I replied, a little weakly.

"Poor kid!" said Arline. "You're a girl with brains, May, lots of 'em; but you've let your heart control 'em. I'm going to stay up here with you tonight, for somehow I feel that you're going to have room for me."

YES, Arline knew men of a certain type. She was right. I had room for her that night—and many nights. Joe did not come back. Even then, I continued to think that "something had happened to him," and to satisfy me, Arline called up the Gerard Machine Shop, where Joe had told me he had been working. Joe's story had been at least founded on fact; there was a Gerard Machine Shop, but the facts of his story had ended there, for they had never employed a man named Joe Whitney.

I commenced to get panicky. My baby was on the way, and now I dreaded the event that I had been anticipating with such longing in my heart. What would I do when it did come? Most of my money was gone.

I grew very close to Arline during this trying period. I learned a great deal about types of people. Here was Arline, hennaed and lip-sticked, singing in a cheap cabaret show, dining out with men of an evening's acquaintanceship, and she proved that soft hearts are often where we least expect to find them.

"Don't you worry one teeny bit, May," she kept telling me. "Not while I have my rings left and can work. And don't even worry about me. I seem wild, but I'm pretty cautious—now. When the baby comes, it will be well cared for, and your job in the bazar is always waiting for you, dear."

The baby came one soft spring evening. We called it May, after Mother, and myself, and the month of its birth. It was all I had—except Arline. As it grew lusty and strong I would clasp it to me and fairly quiver with joy. It seemed to make up for everything I had gone through. Week after week Arline would bring in new



. . . not aware of the goings-on around us.

things for it—those fluffy little bits of eider-down, and hoodls and blankets and little baby-shoes or booties—all marked with the label of the store where I had worked. She refused to let me pay her for them—said she had bought them at wholesale rates.

THE time approached when I was strong enough to go back to work. And then early one morning Arline came home from the cabaret and woke me up. She went over and kissed little May, sleeping cozily in her crib, and asked me to get up and join her in a cup of tea.

"Why, Arline!" I protested, "we'll be awake all night after drinking tea at this hour!"

"Well," said Arline, "we're going to have a long talk. Come on; I'll make the tea and you jump up and slip on a kimono."

I did as she asked. We had the tea and some biscuit, and then Arline got into her night-clothes and flopped

down and lit a cigarette. She was nervous all the while.

"No use asking you to have one of these pills," she said, as she blew out a stream of smoke, "but May, you're going to step out a little from now on. You may not think so, but you're going to. Now don't be shocked. I'm going to tell you something, and you're not going to say a word until I'm all through. Is that fair enough?"

"I suppose so," I said, smilingly. "What's the dark secret?"

"There's plenty of them, May," she replied, seriously. "They're all around us. If we could take off the tops of these houses and look down into the homes! You're up against life. Maybe you think you know it already. I got a letter from Ted out in Vermilion—one of those profound letters of his. He thinks he knows it, too. But he's studying it out of books, and I've studied it out of people.

"Now, we're two of the best friends in the world—if we are cousins," she added cynically. "We're more like sisters. You've had a raw deal. Your sweetness has been imposed upon, the same as mine was before I grew wiser. I'm straight, May; that is. I'm not living wrong, but I've had my bumps, too. Now, hold your breath and don't faint. And don't think too hard of me, dear," she added, her voice breaking a little and the tears glistening in her eyes. "I've got a baby, too, May, and we are in the same boat."

I tried to appear calmer than I felt—probably not fooling Arline any, either—and then went over and put my arms around her.

"I'm sure there's a good reason for any mistake you have made," I said.

"I'll say there was a reason," Arline agreed. "Some girls might call it love. I thought it was, at the time, and went so far as to marry him. I wouldn't tell you all this even now, but it affects you and little May."

"I was as simple as you were when I first came here," she continued. "My first job was right in the store where you have been working, but I was up in the cloak department, in the other wing. I suppose you know that Ed Simmons, who ran your department is a nephew by marriage of old Stacy, a member of the firm. Ed had just come into the store then to break into the business. He had come from St. Louis, he said. I guess my fresh young appearance appealed to him. Now, understand, May, Ed isn't one of those black-mustached villains that we used to see on the stage back in the opera house. He's just—well, just an average man. I'm sure he could not stoop, for instance, to do the thing that Joe did. Well, Ed took me out and made me care for him. Then, when I was thinking of the ceremony under the white [Turn to page 74]

What's the idea of staying up? she was asking through the door. "Haven't the love-birds gone to roost for the night?"

Far From Broadway

EDITH SHEPPARD,
of the New "Greenwich
Village Follies," spends
a great deal of time on
the links in spite of what
would seem to be plenty
of exercise in her
dancing show.

4

This picture of DIXIE BOATRIGHT seems to be very unusual, judged by the majority of the poses of beauties in "Louis XIV." It lacks stage settings, and costumes, 'n' everything, but—





DOROTHY KNAPP, after
a series of triumphs as a beauty
contest winner—and most of the
contests are among bathing
beauties—has found her way
into the "Ziegfeld Follies." In
her odd moments she is always
at one of the ocean resorts.



And then, like a breath of cool
night air, we find JANE
ELKINS of the "Music Box
Review" gay, fresh and smiling
after a day of work. She is as
sweetly alluring in the costume
as she is in the setting prepared
by the management of her
theatre.



"If you ever
pull a gat on
me, I'll pull
the hide clean
off your
back."

Where Am I Now?

THE guns of dope fiends are spitting death all about me. A human life is worth no more than a case of liquor to these men who are making the deeds of Captain Kidd, Flint, and Bluebeard fade away in comparison.

And I know, for I am an unwilling part of it!

I wish I could write this story and put in all the little things that flash through my mind. But probably I would ramble and wander so that you wouldn't understand, anyway.

Up to the time I was seventeen I went to the public schools in Atlanta, Georgia. Then my mother sent me away to boarding-school, hoping the strict discipline would tame me down a bit. Not that I was really bad or vicious; I was just full of pep and the joy of life, and wanted to stick my nose into everything and find out what everything was all about.

I was born with very black hair and what my nurse used to call "the devil spaklin' in dem deep brown eyes," as she coddled me. Mother always let me do almost as I pleased, because she knew that I could take care of myself pretty well. Then she expected me to bow to a

"I have written five notes and thrown them overboard in bottles. But surely someone knows about this—and no one seems able to stop it."

set of what I thought were ridiculous rules and regulations. I soon learned to hate the place.

And when I went home for Christmas vacation, Mother was married again. She hadn't even written me about it. I had always suspected the man Mother intended marrying as wanting only her money. My own father left her pretty well fixed, but he left me without anything in my own name. So I refused to go back to school. I wanted to stay at

home to protect Mother. She pleaded with me, and my new step-father threatened, but I wouldn't budge.

After I had been home a month, it was more than evident that it would never be like home to me again.

So I decided that I too would get married!

SINCE I was twelve years old I had always been Glen Phillips' "girl." Glen was three years older than I, his people had lots of money, and, well, he seemed like the most logical person for me. So I made up my mind to marry Glen.

But I didn't.

I married a man twenty-seven years old, who "picked"

me up. I was coming home on the trolley one day, and he nearly ran over me with his car just as I stepped off. It was a peach of a car—even nicer than the one Glen's father had given him for Christmas. I noticed that first, and then I noticed Dave's blue eyes and his smile.

I know my eyes were spitting fire when he drew over beside the curb and said, "I'm awfully sorry. I didn't see you getting off, and I thought the trolley was going to start ahead." Then he smiled—a roguish sort of smile, that entreated me to smile with him.

AND the first thing I knew I was smiling with him and sitting beside him in his car while he drove me home. And I promised him that I would go for a ride with him the next day. I told Mother he was a boy I had met at Emily Franklin's at tea that afternoon.

Because of the strain that always existed around the house when my step-father and I were both there, Mother never tried to hold me in a bit. But the next afternoon when I brought Dave Wilbur into the house and introduced him to Mother, she expressed her opinion when he had gone.

"He's too old for you, dear," she said. And before I could answer, my step-father growled, "If you get into any trouble running around with every Tom, Dick, and Harry, you needn't come back here looking for sympathy. You can just get out and stay out!"

I didn't know what to say to him then; now, I would know. All I could do was just stand before him in a white rage, stuttering. Then I ran up to my room and cried until I was nearly exhausted. I hated him as I have only hated one other person.

But that settled it as far as home was concerned. My only desire was to get married and have my own home, so that I would never have to see him again, and have my Mother come to visit me away from his bullying influence. I loved Mother, and I know she adored me, but she was the sort who had to be "protected."

That evening Glen took me to a movie. We sat in the last row and held hands, as usual, and he stole two or three kisses. But while he kissed me I thought of Dave Wilbur. His blue eyes and smile seemed to haunt me.

But that night I tried, in an amateur way, to make Glen ask me to marry him. And he began to generalize on our marriage at some distant, vague time in the future. That was the last time I ever saw Glen.

The next day Dave Wilbur told me he was working on some promotion scheme for a group of New York and Chicago bankers. But he didn't tell me anything about his family or his friends. When I asked him, he just looked into my eyes and laughed me out of all the questions I asked. And he took me in his arms and thrilled me from the tips of my toes to my shiny black hair. I don't believe anyone ever possessed more magnetism than Dave; just plain animal magnetism, mostly, but I didn't understand that then. I didn't clearly understand the emotions that left me gasping for breath when he took me in his arms.

HE ASKED me the next night to marry him. And I said I would. God, what a little rattle brain I was about it all! I didn't stop to think about anything I should have—I just wanted to get married, and thought that anything would be better than what I had.

Two days later we drove to Marietta, a little town about twenty miles from Atlanta, with all my earthly possessions strapped on the back of the car, and were married. I wired Mother, and then we kept on in Dave's car. He said he had to go to Chicago, and that we could make that our wedding trip.

I tried to get Mother on the telephone the next day,

but my step-father answered and said she didn't want to talk to me. I knew he lied—and told him so, before I slammed up the receiver. Then I wrote my Mother a long letter telling her about my wonderful happiness.

Dave Wilbur was the sort of man that women call a perfect lover—the sort that women love to play with, although they know he is fire and bitter ashes. He could twist me around his finger as though I were made of putty, with his pretty little phrases and his gentle, tender ways.

I simply worshiped and adored him. He was everything that any girl could want or wish for on her honeymoon. Waitresses, cigar-stand girls in hotels, girls on the street, all looked into his eyes for a smile. But he was mine!

He was mine—until two weeks after we reached Chicago. One day I came back to our hotel room to find an envelope enclosing five hundred dollars and a note. The note said that Wilbur was not his right name, that he had been married before he married me, and that

I would probably never see him again. He meant to say he "hoped" I would never see him again. It seemed to me that just as I stood on the threshold of the gates of heaven they had been slammed in my face. I nearly went crazy for a few days. I thought at first of killing myself. Then I got mad, white hot mad, and swore that I would find him and punish him if it was the last thing I ever did in all my life. But pride kept me from going to the police, and I knew only generalities about him. In my despair I telegraphed to Mother. No reply.

So I paid my hotel bill and took a train to New York. Why I went to New York, I don't know, except that I think everyone in the world has a desire to live there at one time or another. I went to a hotel where Mother and I had stayed the year before, and found the rates even higher than the outrageous ones in Chicago. I stayed there only a week, because after



What had I before me in life? How easy it

buying myself some clothes my money had dwindled down to the last hundred dollars. For the first time in my life I realized that in order to eat, I must have money.

So I found a cheaper hotel down near the Washington Square section, where I moved with my two bags and the seventy dollars. I knew something had to be done pretty quickly, and I wouldn't have asked Mother for any money if I had been starving to death.

WHEN I went to the Y. W. C. A. employment agency and asked about a job, they in turn asked me what I could do. And I told them the truth—nothing. It looked pretty hopeless at first, but after a week they landed me a job as a file girl in the offices of a clothing concern just a little way from my hotel. I was to receive fifteen dollars a week, so I decided that I must find a still cheaper place to live.

The first day I went to work I dropped into a little place called *The Purple Door* to eat my luncheon. The girl who waited on me was dressed in an artist's smock

When she wasn't busy, she came over to my table and sat down and smoked a cigarette. I confided to her that I didn't know a single person in New York and that she was the first person who had been at all friendly. She said, "Oh, we're all friendly down here. If we don't know each other, we just talk anyway, and it's all perfectly straight, too."

"What do you mean 'perfectly straight'?" I asked.

"No funny business—oh, you know what I mean," she answered, looking at me closely to see if I were kidding her.

I turned a little red and said, "Oh, I see," and we began to talk about her job. Then I told her about mine.

"Gee, you ought to come over here," she said.

"I make about fifty a week, counting tips. One week I come on at eleven and work till eight, and the next week I work from eight at night until one in the morning. It's just like working for yourself. We," and she indicated several other girls who were sitting at a long table over at one side smoking and laughing and jabbering, "can do as we please when we aren't busy."

I looked at my watch and said I had to get back to work; she gave me a little smile and said, "Well, so long! Come in again."

The next day I went back to *The Purple Door* for luncheon. And the next day following I went to work there as a waitress. It seemed far preferable to sticking pieces of paper away in a little folder. And besides, I could make three times as much money.

In three days I began to get the swing of things, and in ten I was known as "Blackeyes" to everyone who came in the little tea-room. They were a typical Greenwich Village crowd. They didn't ask questions, because they were all too busy talking about themselves. In two weeks I was really one of them.

Then one night I called Mother on long distance. She answered the telephone, and after ten words had been spoken I could tell by the tone of her voice that my step-father had even converted her into believing that I was all the things he believed me to be. I cried over the phone and for a moment Mother's

voice faltered. There was a pause—I heard a voice beside her say something. Then she said, "Well good-night, dear. Write to me." It was almost like a physical blow. That is the last time I ever heard her voice.

Something died in my heart that night and I became like some driven beast.



would be, I thought, to jump into the black, churning water below me, and be swallowed up forever.

and had an enormous red ribbon bound about her bobbed hair. She had friendly black eyes and a lovely smile, and because I was simply famished for someone to talk to, I talked to her. Everyone who came in seemed to know her. They called her "Peggy," and treated her like one of them instead of like a waitress.

One night when I was on from eight to one, a young fellow everyone called Johnnie asked me to sit down and smoke a cigarette with him. He gave me a drink, and we talked about liquor and bootleggers mostly. Then he told me about friends of his that had made fortunes selling the stuff.

The next day he came back and I sat with him again. I liked him. He was a little flashy and hard, but in a nice way. That night he showed me a clipping from a newspaper about a woman living in Brooklyn who had made over forty-thousand dollars bootlegging. At the end of the little account the paper said that after paying

"Listen," he said. "I'm a bootlegger." He sat back to see how I would take it. But I had got used to taking things in life, even at my age, and I didn't bat an eyelash.

"Then I suppose you own two or three Rolls Royces," I laughed.

"No, but I got a good car and a lot of jack salted away that they'll never get," he informed me. "An' I'll tell you what I'll do. You're a good kid and a square shooter, I think. I'll tell you what I'll do," he repeated. "I'll rent a room next door and put in about half a dozen cases. I'll tell you the prices I pay for it and the price you're to sell it at. Then we'll split the profits. No risk



"Der's some glad-rags fer you, kid. Don' say I never done nothin' fer you!"

her fine of three-thousand—it was the first time she had been caught—she would have plenty left to keep her through old age.

"That's worth a thought, isn't it, 'Blackeyes'?" Johnnie said.

"I'll say it's worth a couple of thoughts," I answered.

For a moment he sat peering intently into my eyes. Then he said, "How would you like to clean up that much jack?" "I'd hate it!" I answered.

"No reason why you shouldn't," he said. "You could sell a raft of it in this place. Look at all the kids who come in here with bottles on their hip. After a while they run out of liquor and go chasing outside to get more. If the bird who runs this place had a bean at all, he'd peddle it himself!"

"He probably doesn't want to take a chance," I said.

SAY, there's no more chance to it than there is to selling mushrooms," he half laughed. "Why, they aren't lookin' for this kind of place. What they wanna get is the big guys with a storehouse full."

"Why don't you peddle some down here?" I suggested, smiling.

Then he told me what he was driving at.

on your part. I put up the cash. An' in case anything happens, I'll see you through and pay your fine. Whadda you say?"

For a moment I was too surprised to speak. Then I laughed in his face and wondered what my step-father would say if he had been present to hear our conversation.

For a week I turned it over and over in my mind, and when I told him I had decided to take a chance, he said he knew that he had picked a kid with something in her "dome" besides air. The next day he put in a supply of liquor for me and gave me the key.

I was on from eleven to eight that week, so I didn't have much of a chance to get my new business started. Most of the liquor buyers came in after eight. Besides, I wanted to take it a little cautiously at first.

Wednesday noon Johnnie came in for luncheon. I sat down at his table, and after a while he asked me how I'd like to get a thrill that night. I told him I had already had about every thrill that life could dish up, and he threw back his head and laughed.

"Well, I'll give you a new one if you wanna chase along with me down the Jersey coast tonight," he said.

"Where?"

"I'm going down to pick up [Turn to page 110]

*The
Conclusion
of the Story
Which Tells
How a Girl
Learned the
Meaning of
Two Words*



Doctors' Wives

THERE was a sudden halt in my adventure. I was given an opportunity to think what I had done and see the high spots of my life the last few months.

I had played ill, in order to visit a doctor of whom I had been warned by my matrons; I had flirted with his partner, Dr. Ralph Chase, because I thought it would make him jealous; I had dropped Ralph and caused the two men to dissolve partnership, because Ralph became jealous; I had been sent from home, because my father received an anonymous message that I was having an affair with the doctor; I had married him the same day, because my father didn't want me and I didn't know what else to do.

My husband was wrapped up in his profession. On our wedding night he was out on an all-night case. He

had no time for my pleasures—shows, dances, evenings at home; however, he loved me and thought he was doing everything for my happiness. But, just as I had thought, it was horrid to be a doctor's wife.

After six months of this, Ralph bobbed up again. Even though he confessed having written the anonymous note to my father, I clung to him because I wanted to punish my husband. It was after a quarrel that Ralph asked me to go away with him. I was mad—irresponsible. I would rush off with Ralph, and make my husband come after me, repentant.

And so we drove like mad through the night, out north Main Street, then out Niagara Boulevard, with the streetlights dancing by like candle-flames. They grew thinner and Buffalo lay behind, then the Tona-

A boy touching a match to a few pieces of wood in a rusty stove.



wandas, and then Niagara Falls. My anger still burned within me as the car ate up the miles. At last we stopped at a roadhouse hotel a thousand miles from nowhere. I had recognized the country as far as the Falls, but after that we circled and turned until we might have been anywhere. And I was so upset I didn't even wonder about it. All I knew was that Buffalo lay many, many miles behind.

We entered the isolated hostelry together. The nattily dressed man who met us addressed Ralph:

"Dr. Chase, shall I show you and Mrs. Chase right up to your room? I've held it since you wired last week."

[The Conclusion]

THE pieces of the story did not fit together at all. "How could you have wired last week?" I asked, "when we did not speak of going away until this morning?"

Ralph took me by the arm, trying to draw me away from the portly person, who was obviously the owner of the roadhouse at which we had stopped.

"Has Mrs. Chase left her bag in the car?" he asked.

"I'm not Mrs. Chase," I snapped back. "And I have no bag. Will you please leave us alone?"

When he had gone, Ralph tried to pacify me. "You're tired, Hester. Let's have dinner before I explain."

"You'll explain this minute," I retorted. "I won't eat a bite until it's all clear. No, and I won't sit down, either. Why did he expect me to bring a bag? What would I

need a bag for?" A girl is not always sophisticated because she is married.

I saw amazement dawn in his eyes. "Don't be a little fool, Hester. One generally carries clothes in a bag."

I was about to ask him why I would need clothes, when the truth flashed before me with staggering force, lifting the stupor from my brain.

"You mean—you mean that you thought I would betray—I would be unfaithful to my husband?" I stammered.

"Wasn't that why you came away with me?"

At the thought that my vague intention had taken such definite, evil shape in his mind, and had now whizzed back to me like a boomerang, unbridled anger surged through me. I stepped forward, and struck him sharply—struck the face of that cool devil that I had thought was my friend and protector.

Ralph seized my wrists. "Cut the theatrics, you spitfire," he said. "Did you think I was driving you all the way out here to play hide-and-seek with your husband?"

YOU made me believe you didn't know where we were going. And you always meant to come out here!"

"What difference did it make?"

Things about Ralph flooded back to my memory. Suddenly I pretended to calm down. I had to calm down. I had to think.

"The difference it made is this: you deceived me; you

meant to come out here last week with another woman; and what's more, you made me think you understood me."

"I was coming with you, Hester," he insisted with a trace of sullenness. "You had me twisted forty ways, and you know it."

"Coming with me a week ago? I only quarreled last night. Why, we never even discussed going away together until this morning!"

"That's so," he agreed. "But you've been headed for a quarrel for months. It didn't matter so much whether it was last week, or this week—"

Then came the second flash of comprehension. I knew! That white hot anger rose in me again, and I confronted him with the accusation.

He was just a buzzard, a bird of prey, hovering around to feed on the unhappiness of women. He had planned this trip of ours weeks in advance. He had schemed out my temptation and fall. He had come around scenting out trouble, waiting to pounce. And he had been so certain of success, that he went to the length of reserving a room for us in this place a whole week in advance

MY POSITION was appalling; his behavior was revolting. I cannot recall the exact words of my crushing denunciation. I have no recollection at all of the flaming, scorching, withering names I hurled at him. I trembled with the force of my own wrath, with the nervous chill of excitement. I was just dimly conscious of the open fires, of the warm friendliness of the entrance hall in which we stood. Ralph's figure was the only point of reality.

"There's one thing you forget, though," he said. "When a woman is pretty and lets another man see that her husband is making her unhappy, as you did, a man has the right to believe that she's willing to get consolation out of a little adventure on the side."

There was the matter in a nutshell. He was blaming me for the whole disagreeable affair, and alas! he was right. I had led him on.

"Where are you going?" I heard Ralph say.

I found myself at the door, not knowing how I had come there. He was advancing, and I put up my hands as if to ward him off. He stopped where he was.

"Don't be a fool, Hester," he advised. "You can't go back tonight. The weather is foul. I'm no cad. You can get a room on the other side of the house."

"I'm going home," I kept repeating; "I'm going home. I want to go home."

"It's going to take you all night to get to Buffalo. Your husband won't believe your story, anyway—"

I was outside; out in the dripping, damp world. I might have seen some hope had there been a glimmer of light in the sky. But it was black, velvet black. The rain fell in long, straight, sharp needles. It fell endlessly, piercing, penetrating.

I had been running down that ghastly road for ten minutes, when I realized how relentless the rain could be. My clothes were already damp and uncomfortable. Water dripped from my hat. I pulled myself up.

It was silly to run. I could gain little time by doing so and would only lose what little strength I had left. Besides, I did not think that Ralph would follow me.

I must get to a railroad. That was it. A railroad. On a train I could still get home that night. We couldn't have gone so very far. Still, it had taken us all day to drive out. That thought terrorized me. What if there really was no train?

[Turn to page 98]



"Will you please tell me what time I can get a train back to Buffalo?"

The Son of My Father

Dear Mr.—

This story is true with the exception that at places I have glossed over periods which, to recount, might do injury to others.

It is my own story—and that of the girl Edna:

Through what occurred to me in this chronicle, came the knowledge of the really worth while things in life and the inspiration which resulted in my eventual rehabilitation.

I am not one of those who quits—I am going to make the grade.

Sincerely yours,

I THINK that I was born in the "Lower East Side." I say I "think" that I was born there, because my earliest memories are of that district.

Of my own mother and the circumstances which took her out of my life, I know absolutely nothing. I have searched high and low for some clue which might lead me to her. It has always ended in disappointment. I feel certain that if my efforts ever meet with success, I shall find that she was a real woman; too good to be associated with the other characters who came and went, like shadow pictures, throughout the earlier stages of my life.

My earliest recollections are of three stuffy, ill-smelling rooms presided over by a woman.

Her consort, whom later on I learned was my father, spent most of his time "up the river." When he did come home I did not register any undue enthusiasm, as it only meant a double shift of misery for me; they both had a delightful habit of spending the few idle moments in their otherwise eventful lives in knocking me around those three rooms.

At the age of nine I had my own duties to perform, the most important of which was to see that no copper interfered with the mysterious conclaves which were held from time to time in my father's home.



My station was on the curb in front of the house, and here for hours at a time I would amuse myself playing with my choice and extensive assortment of toys—empty bottles, cigar boxes, spools. But they were beautiful toys.

The spools, which were my choicest treasures, I had promoted myself.

A beautiful lady, quite different from the woman, used to come by the place where I was playing—and watching. She must have seen how I valued my spools, for the next morning when she came along she gave me a whole sack of them.

We became quite well acquainted, and she used to ask me questions, which long experience had taught me not to answer.

ONE wonderful day she brought me some candy and lifted me from the sidewalk into her arms. The woman, looking from the window, saw her kiss me. Again I was retired for a few days. I did not see her when I recovered, but later on she played an important part in my story.

As I grew up with the rest of the dogs and cats of that neighborhood, I became more valuable to the world in which I moved.



Someone Standing in a Window Above Stopped Me With a Soft-Nosed Bullet, and Then a Surgeon Saved Me. I Wonder if They Know They Took a Born Thief and Made Him See—

"She can stay with my wife until we can find something for her to do."

One day, while I was on guard in the gutter, my father pushed his noble brow out of the window and called me into the house.

Sitting across the table, with one of the familiar bottles beside him, was a tall, fine-looking fellow.

To my surprise they were both very friendly; even my father, whom I generally approached in a diplomatic way, had a smile for me.

I was quite proud when I realized that I was the real feature of the entertainment. I was placed mid-stage and given my first real lesson in what was to be my profession for many years—a pickpocket known to the Grey Brotherhood of prisons and to the police of the large cities of two continents. Concha Dan had just been released from the "summer home" up the river, and, being an old pal of my father's, had called to renew old associations.

Over the bottle and glasses had been born in Dan's fertile brain a plan whereby, with a little training on my part, combined with caution on theirs, plenty of money could be brought into their pockets—and the bottle would always be full.

I was shown just how to stand and watch my father until he raised his hat. That was my cue to start crying—and cry hard enough to attract Dan's attention. That was easy, for I cried quite a bit at times.

Dan would stop in the center of the room and solicitously ask me what the trouble was. My answer was: "Please, sir, will you carry me across the street? I am afraid of the cars."

Dan would pick me up in his arms—then came the finesse. As he carried me across the room I would cling closely to him, and then unscrew a stud which he had placed in his shirt-front.

After loosening the stud Dan would put me down on the floor. Then I would thank him for his kindness—this was a very important part of my lesson—and leave the room. Dan would follow and take the stud.

After several rehearsals we decided to try it out. I was perfectly willing. This was a new game, and somehow I knew that if we succeeded things would be a little less strenuous for me around the house.

I HAD good grounds for this when, on one afternoon while Dan was rehearsing me, I had just taken his stud and was going through that very important part of the act of getting away from the gentleman. As I ducked into the next room I ran right into the woman. As usual, she reached for me and knocked me flat on my back.

Can you imagine my surprise when my father, in unrighteous indignation, came to my rescue, and, with a few choice curses reinforced by a well directed blow, stretched the woman out by my side.

It came to me instantly that I had become an asset. That this was the right conclusion was proved beyond all doubt, for from that time on the woman beat me in private.

The long-looked-for day arrived at last, and Dan came for me.

From some mysterious place they produced a child's sailor suit, a pair of stockings, and a pair of slippers.

With the passing of many years most of the details have left me, but I can still distinctly remember two highlights in the preparation for that initial trip into thievery. The first and most vivid is that of the scrubbing which Dan gave me; the other, the pride in my own appearance when at last I had on that wonderful sailor suit.

When they had finished with my toilette they stood me up across the room and gave me the once-over. Apparently satisfied with that, they then put me through the final rehearsal. I acquitted myself in such a creditable

manner that I got quite a hand from my admiring audience.

With a few profane threats concerning the dire disaster which would attend me in the event of failure, Dan and the newest recruit to crookdom ventured forth on a treasure hunt.

As near as I can figure out, I was nine years old when I made this important step in my development—an undersized, undernourished worm of Lower East Side.

Dan finally picked a busy corner in what is now the "roaring forties." I was placed on that corner and Dan took up his post in a cigar store across the street.

Two doors below the cigar store was a small rathskeller. Dan had learned that a bondbroker, who had offices in the building which stood on the corner where I was posted, had the habit of coming down to this rathskeller to get his noon-day luncheon. He had also learned that this man wore a magnificent diamond stud.

That broker was the "prospect" for whom we were waiting. Many people passed, and still Dan lounged at the cigar store counter, talking to the clerk but keeping an eye on the huge doorway from which our treasure ship was to sail.

I had my instructions to keep my eye on Dan—and I did. Suddenly he straightened and looked intently towards my corner. Slowly his hand went up to his hat, and from that moment it was up to me.

I remember a tall, white-haired man standing, undecidedly at the curb. At first it looked as though he was going to turn down Broadway instead of up; but finally he started toward me and the act was on. I began to cry.

I SUPPOSE I put too much endeavor into this, for a street-sweeper in a white suit, who had been cleaning the gutter at the corner, stepped over to me and said: "What is the trouble, little fellow. Are you lost?"

This would not do at all, so I rushed pell-mell into the old gentleman who had paused when the commotion had started.

He patted my head and asked me the trouble; in broken tones I explained that I was afraid to cross the street. He stooped and raised me to his arms.

Now for the result of my careful training!

As we crossed the street the old gentleman kept questioning me, and I had my hands too full to answer him. I had to get that stud loosened before we reached the other side of the street.

I could hardly get away from the old fellow who had decided that I was really lost. Finally I kicked and squirmed until, in desperation, he placed me on the sidewalk. Then I took to my heels. As I turned the corner I looked back and could see the broker still standing where he had set me down. I suppose he was trying to figure out just what was happening. Of course I was frightened—but I had the "rock."

In the middle of the block Dan caught up with me and demanded the stud. When he saw it he whistled, then placed it in his vest pocket, took me by the hand and,

by a circuitous route, led me back to my father's hang-out.

The stone was sold to a "fence" that night, and for the next week hilarity reigned in our cheerful home. I was very popular until they got good and drunk. Then I reverted to my original status, and became the recipient of many blows and curses. Still, I was proud of my success and knew that when the money was gone I would come into my own again.

Dan and I turned many tricks together during the next three or four months; then the "break" came.

Coming home with Dan one afternoon after one of our regular adventures, we turned into the block where I lived. Standing in front of our place was a well known and much detested conveyance—a patrol wagon. Dan, apparently suffering from a high nervous disorderment of some kind, stopped on the corner. He instructed me to go on home and tell my father that he would see him later. That's the last time I saw Dan.

I had no other place to go, so I walked down the street and into the house. A big cop gathered me in as soon as I stepped into the room. The place looked lovely—the furniture over-turned, broken dishes and bottles strewn about the floor.

The principle objects of interest in the room were my father and the woman. The woman was sitting slumped over in a chair, her wrists encircled by a shiny pair of handcuffs. In the opposite corner in his favorite chair, with a look of discouragement on his face and the same adornment on his wrists, sat my father.

The cop asked me a lot of questions and then took me to the door, where he called another man in uniform. He spoke to him for a few moments, saying something about a Society. I was taken away. That's the last time I saw the woman or my father.

They all three, these pastmasters who had so painstakingly set my young feet upon the path that was to insure me a long trip through police courts and prisons, here stepped out of my life.

The woman went up the river with the other two. I learned afterwards that she died there. One year after my release from the training school, I learned the final chapter in the lives of the other two: my father was stabbed to death in a drunken brawl; for his murder, Concha Dan made his exit through the little green baize door at Sing Sing.

The Society did what they could for me during the four years which I spent in its care. I learned to read a little, to write a little—and added immeasurably to my store of knowledge of thievery.

THOSE in charge were good souls, but the problem is too big for them. What one kid does not know, another does. I was steeped in the accumulated knowledge of all.

The day came when I was called to the office, along with several other young products of the then seething hell below Fourteenth Street. We were, if I remember rightly, as much alike as peas.

The inspection was for the purpose of allowing Phineas Buell to choose for himself what he considered

a good investment—and I was the victim. Yes, the victim.

After the necessary papers had been signed, the superintendent of the home gave me a farewell talk. The point chiefly discussed was the wonderful opportunity which had come to me through, and the gratitude I should feel for, Mr. Buell—for his kindness in giving me a beautiful home in the country.

The great happy thought that kept drumming in my head and heart was this: I was to have a home in the country! A home like other kids! And for a few days I was grateful and happy, but *only* for a few days.



With our entire wardrobe on our backs, we started for the pot of gold at the rainbow's end.

I was given the permission of bidding the other morsels of humanity good-by. How my thoughts go back! The most vivid of all the pictures which come to me is that of those little, helpless, friendless mites, standing in a row—like the checkers on a board—to be moved here and there as though by a machine, a heartless machine, bidding me good-by.

I can still see the looks of wistfulness; of valiant but suppressed envy; of longing; see them all in the eyes of those poor little kids, who, with the ignorance of true values which had been soaked into their baby hearts by the environment of the places where they had been born, longed with all the strength of their weak little beings to change places with me.

They envied me, and I—well—I was really going on into the initiation of another degree of the hell of rotteri environment.

For a few days I was a normal happy kid. The place where Phineas Buell took me was the usual type of the New England farm. A huge, bare house; still more huge barns; and the presiding genius of the whole affair was a female by the name of Sarah. I never learned her other name.

Sarah was a long, gaunt, hard-featured woman, who could find almost as many excuses for beating me as did the woman in the old days before Dan hit the skids at Sing Sing.

Another feature of the household was a young girl by the name of Edna, a niece of Mr. Buell's. Edna knew more of the things a girl should not know than any girl or woman I have ever known—and I have known many. She was fifteen at the time I became one of the Buell slaves.

THESE, including a fellow who worked for Phineas, and who graciously, and by Phineas' orders, allowed me to sleep in the barn with him, comprised the Buell menage.

The only good thing that came to me during my slavery was the days I spent in the little country school-room. Those days were very precious to me, for in the kindly old school-teacher I found the only tenderness of my life up to that period. It was he that awoke the spark which I had inherited from one far above my father.

The story need not be told of the beatings, the inhuman tasks allotted to me to do; the thousand and one agonies and tortures which Phineas and his Jezebel Sarah inflicted upon me.

The day came when, despairing of ever finding the milk of human kindness under the roof or in the hearts of those to whom I had been given by the law, I decided to run away.

There was but one place for me to go—New York City—and I went. More, I took Edna with me.

One night we stole out of the house and, with our entire wardrobes on our backs, started for where I knew we would find the pot of gold at the rainbow's end—that end of it which supported its part of the glorious arc from Lower East Side.

How the arch-fiend and his imps must have laughed, as we plodded along the dark road—two kids with two warped little souls—like two autumn [Turn to page 107]

I Saw Her Selling Goods to Henry

*He Looked More
Nervous Than I'd
Seen Him in a Long
Time. His Hands
Were Clasping and
Unclasping While
She Talked!*

IF YOU walk down Main Street in Danville, anybody will be glad to point out THE BIG STORE to you. You ought to be able to see it, anyway. Heaven knows I've spent enough money on the building.

It is big, too, for a town the size of Danville. Our population is about twenty thousand, and I hire nearly a hundred men and women, all told.

Over the entrance you'll see a small, neat, good-looking sign: JOHN TOOMEY, Prop. That's me.

I've been in business in Danville for forty years, and I figure I ought to know something about it. Yet, nearly

every week some smart-aleck drummer from New York, Chicago or 'Frisco comes into my office and says to me: "Mr. Toomey," he says, "you're a rich merchant, and a clever one! You could make a big fortune in one of the large cities. Why'n't you pull up stakes from this little hick town, and do business in a real, hustling man-size city?"

That's what they say to me—and most of them still wet behind the ears! And then I turn on them and I say: "Young man! I'm a rich merchant and a clever one, as you say—because I do business in what you have





When I came on the scene,
they shifted their interest
to the dolls.

the gall to call a hick town! And I'm more than that," I tell them. "I'm contented and happy—and I never would be in your soulless, hustling man-size cities!

So if you want my trade," I tell them, "you'll keep your advice under your vest, and you'll lay off roasting Danville. It's my home and my life!"

That generally holds them. I can manage to look pretty ferocious when I'm saying it. There's lots who tell me that with a big chin like mine I ought never to fear anything. That chin has put the fear of God into more fresh drummers than any sermon they could hear.

I only know that it saves me a heap of time, and that it's a business asset. If I were a married man—but that's another story. This is the story of Henry Bream and his wife, and how they came to know each other.

Henry first came to my store about three years ago. I didn't notice him at first. After all, you can't notice every customer, even though you do make the round of the store three or four times a day.

And Henry's not the sort of man you'd be likely to notice, anyway. He's a small, insignificant looking man, with a very kind and timid expression. He's the sort of man who probably keeps an extra pair of rubbers in

his office in case it should rain. That's how he struck me.

Henry must have been a customer of mine for several months before I began to notice that he was coming regularly.

Then I looked up the books, and from what he'd bought I figured that he must be a married man with a fair-sized income. You can tell a good deal about a man and his life, if you know pretty well what he spends his cash on. I saw that he'd been buying house-furnishings, dress materials, hats, kitchen-ware and toys. I had him figured as a head clerk or something similar, with probably a couple of children. He'd opened a charge account, and most of his purchases he carried away with him. I made a few inquiries and found that his wife never came to the store. Henry made all the purchases himself. Well, that's not unusual. I figured that probably the Big Store lay on his way to business, and that his wife used him as a sort of errand boy. There are lots of husbands that way. Some of them big, husky fellows, too!

ONE afternoon I met Henry in the fancy leather department. He was looking over my shelves in his funny, nervous little way. I like to become personally



acquainted with my regular customers, and business was rather slack that afternoon, so I went up and spoke to him.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Bream!" I said cordially. "Is there anything I can show you?"

He looked quite startled to hear himself addressed by name, so I introduced myself, and told him that I was very glad to have him for such a regular customer. He smiled in a nervous sort of way, and gave a funny little bow. I thought he was going to say something, but apparently he could think of nothing to say, so after a rather awkward pause he turned once more to an inspection of my merchandise.

I can't explain why it was, but I sort of took a fancy to him right then and there. He looked such a helpless, nervous little fellow, and I'm always sympathetic to that kind. He was very neatly dressed, but I thought he looked pale, and rather unhappy. I asked him again if I couldn't perhaps help him find what he was looking for.

"Well, yes," he said, "I'm looking for a birthday

I don't know what people expected of Faith. Maybe they thought she ought to wear sack cloth and ashes all the time.

present for my wife!" He had a very gentle voice, pitched quite low. I liked the sound of it.

I told the salesgirl that I would look after this customer myself, and I showed him a number of things that I thought would be suitable. I like to serve behind my own counters once in a while.

We became quite chatty, and after twenty minutes or so he selected a nice work-basket that I'd suggested.

"Is your wife fond of needlework?" I asked, just to make conversation, while the parcel was being wrapped.

SHE loves it!" he said quite enthusiastically. "And I just love to watch her! Nothing I like better than to sit by the fire in the evenings, and watch her sew! It's so peaceful, and homelike and charming!" His whole face lit up as he said this, and he looked real happy. I liked that. I like domesticated men.

Well, he paid for his present, and went out, and I didn't see him for another week. Then one afternoon I went into the fur department where we were holding a sale. As I came down the aisle, I saw Henry, who was standing with his back towards me. He was talking to the salesgirl, who was showing him a fur displayed on a dummy. I heard him say something about his wife's birthday.

I thought to myself: "Well, he certainly is a generous husband!" but I hadn't time to talk to him, and I don't think he even saw me. Later, however, the girl had to come and speak to me about that particular sale, and she told me that he had bought a set of furs for his wife's birthday. She was a new girl and rather talkative. I remember something she said to me.

"Mr. Toomey, he was such a nice gentleman! You should have heard the lovely things he said about his wife. He must be just crazy about her."

Well, after that I was always seeing him around the store, and he sure was a good customer. Always buying things for his wife, and for the house, and for his little girl. I found many an opportunity to talk to him, and we got quite friendly. At first he was very shy and timid and reserved, but later he seemed to take to me, and he opened up a bit. He seemed to enjoy our talks together.

He'd been married three years he told me, and they had the sweetest little girl. I enjoyed hearing him tell me his stories. I really got quite fond of the little man. There was something curiously child-like about him, which was remarkable, for he wasn't a boy by any means. I guess he must have been about thirty-eight or forty.

ONE Sunday, about a year after I'd got to know him pretty well, I was driving my car from church when I saw Henry pottering about the yard of his house. It was a right pretty little house and yard, in a new street called Walnut Avenue—with maple trees planted on each side.

I stopped my car to pass the time of day, but Henry didn't seem altogether glad to see me. He acted kind of nervous, and I was rather surprised because I figured we'd known each other long enough by then for him to have got over that.

I admired his little house, and all the time I rather hoped Mrs. Bream and the little girl would appear, because I'd heard so much about them. However, there [Turn to page 89]

"The Funniest

Story I Know"

as Told by

SMART SET Readers

E. B.,
Mauston, Wisc.

IT WAS a dear old lady's first ride in a taxi, and she watched with glowing alarm the driver constantly putting his hand outside the car as a signal to the following traffic. At last she became angry, and said:

"Young man, you look after that car of yours, and watch where you are going; I'll tell you when it starts raining."

* * * * *

Miss E. A.,
Rawlins, Wyo.

A YOUNG couple had just been presented with a baby, and owed a large doctor bill. One night the husband came home very tired, and said, "I paid some more on the doctor bill today."

The mother exclaimed, "Oh, just think! Only two more payments and the baby will be ours."

* * * * *

W. M.,
Palermo, Cal.

A N OLD negro woman was hit by an automobile. While on the way to the hospital, she began to rave and holler. The doctor tried to soothe her.

"Don't get excited, Mammy; you have the best chances in the world for damages."

The old lady looked at him with anger and said, "Damages! Damages! Good Lord, man, I got damages enough. What I needs is a few repairs."

* * * *

H. L. W.,
Alma, Mich.

TWO colored privates were discussing the relative merits of their buglers.

"Why, man, dat bugler of ma reg'ment am so good dat when he plays "Pay Day" it sound zactly lak de Symphony Orchestra playin' "De Rosary."

"Hush yo' mouth, nigger! You ain't got no bugler tall. When ouwah bugler, Snowball Jones, wraps his lips 'roun' his bugle an' plays de mess call, ah looks down at mah beans an' says: "Strawberries, behave yo'se'f; you're kickin' de whipped cream out o' de dish."



S. B. M.,
Tacoma, Wash.

L UCIFER: "Doctuh, ah wants yuh tuh 'zamine mah frien', Smoke. De moonshine whut he done drunk has made him sicker dan uh fool."

Doctor: "Smoke, do you see any dragons or ghosts walking around this office?"

Smoke: "No, suh, ah ain't a-seein' none."

Lucifer: "Lawd help us! Now ah done knows dat boy am past recov'ry, fo' dis heah office am full of dem."

* * * * *

Miss E. M.,
Springfield, Mass.

A SAN FRANCISCO lady was training a new and inexperienced Chinese houseboy, and among other things found it necessary to teach him to receive a caller.

"Now, Wing," she said, "when I come home this afternoon I shall ring the bell, and you must pay attention to what I tell you to do when you open

the door."

When the boy did this on her return, she handed him her visiting card and had him show her into the drawing-room. Soon after, a real caller appeared. Wing took the proffered bit of pasteboard and gravely compared it with his mistress' card, which he produced from his sleeve. After looking at the two for a moment, he remarked:

"Tickee no samee; no can come in."

Sometimes We Get to Talking of What Might Have Been



Herbert enrolled for a correspondence course and I became his instructor.

I MARRIED a poor man, and a very poor one at that. He came back from across the Pond to find me about to be married to a young wealthy officer who had returned sooner than he. Instead of waiting to make a success in life, or to earn a fortune, he persuaded me to elope with him and hand the other fellow the mitten.

Consequently, on my previously set wedding day to the other fellow, Herbert and I skipped away to another town nearby and were married. The money the Government had given Herbert had purchased a suit of civilian clothes; beyond that, he was penniless. However, he had paid for a Liberty Bond while in service, so he sold this to pay for our license, our minister's fees, a wedding dinner, and a suite of rooms at the little hotel.

We were very happy, but the underlying thought of poverty haunted me not a little. Herbert never mentioned the subject during that one brief week, for he probably surmised that this would be a bright spot in the life that must surely follow.

We wired the news home to my people, and a message of forgiveness came in answer to it, setting our minds at ease on that score. I think my parents were glad of my spunk, for I had been raised to a life of economy, and had I suddenly got my hands upon this other fellow's wealth, I would have spent like mad. However, in my present state, I spent like mad—but mad with the thought of rigid economy.

Herbert did not have a position waiting for him when he got back home, for his boss had no patriotic qualms and "saved no jobs for no one." However, he did land a job that would at least keep us in food and shelter. I had been educated as a musician, but had never been forced to earn a living with it. Now I secretly applied for a position in a motion picture house, which, fortunately, I landed.

My husband was rather hurt at heart by my having to work, but I was very happy to lay down a check for

thirty-five dollars each week, and as soon as some of the luxuries of life were assured, I began saving. I was getting more than he, but together we pooled our earnings and spent and saved equally.

The salary I was counting so upon was suddenly cut short when I realized that a little life would soon depend upon me. This feeling was born of love, for in our poverty, even, we were strangely happy in the struggle. I worked until the very last, my condition not becoming apparent to my employers. They were shocked, indeed, when my husband phoned them one cold morning that a little bit of heaven had been sent us that very morning, and I would be unable to come to work.

Our joy was cut short, for our little Sheila, with her coal black curls, went away before the day was over, and our hearts were empty. After the effects of the anaesthetic wore off, I sank into a dream-like coma in which I lay for days. Afterward, my kindly nurse confided to me that Herbert never left my side for hours and hours, not even for a bite to eat, and not even then would he have gone only that they promised to call him should I awake.

The big hospital bill, the doctor's bills, the undertaker's bills, a cemetery lot, and hundreds of other bills, stared us in the face when I was able to return in a wheel chair to our home. Our savings went to pay the hospital bill, which we had not figured on. I had not intended to go to the hospital, but when my condition became alarming, the doctors advised it.

I WAS left in ill health, unable to resume my former job. This, with the grief of losing our daughter, worried me not a little.

Herbert kept cheering me up with promises of a rosy future and perhaps another baby to stay with us some other time. However, our hopes were blasted when I overheard our family doctor [Turn to page 101]



The Essence of Your Beauty is the TEXTURE of Your Skin

HOW PRINCESS PAT TWIN CREAMS DO WHAT NO SINGLE FACE CREAM EVER WAS ABLE TO DO FOR YOUR SKIN'S TEXTURE

REALIZE this first, if you would retain or regain your loveliness, that the very essence of youth's own radiant beauty is a velvety, fine-grained texture of skin. This is beauty. It is *You*.—as you can be. Keep it through the years to come. If this beauty of texture has been lost along the way, bring it back. You must—and you can.

Complexion beauty is never really lost

That is one of the miracles of Nature—your ever-changing skin. Day by day, hour by hour, Nature is casting off the old and building up the new—restoring, reviving, refining.

If, as you look in your mirror, the signs of retreating beauty meet your eyes—if the skin is dull, roughened, faded—you must realize that this is really only a temporary condition, due principally to coarse pores. They are not natural to your skin. Give Nature a chance, for just a brief period, and see how soon she'll build your skin over new, the youthful, glowing, fine-grained complexion you will be proud of.

You, of course, think of all the things you do constantly to help Nature—the care with which you cleanse the pores, the creams with which you massage and nourish and

soften your skin. But think of the one thing you do to obstruct Nature. You do not close the pores. You leave them wide open, unprotected. They become clogged with soil and dust and even possibly with powder. Is it strange that in time they are enlarged, coarsened and the essence of your beauty is destroyed?

There is but one sure way to protect and preserve the texture of your skin—close the pores before powdering, it must be done. There is a way to accomplish this—a new, dainty, delightfully simple way—as effective as a daily beauty parlor facial with its accompanying application of ice. And this new way never fails.

What one cream won't do Princess Pat Twin Creams will

No single face cream can perform the double task of both nourishing the skin and closing the pores. For logically the same ingredients that open the pores cannot also close them. And naturally the skin must be nourished before the pores are closed. This important discovery by Princess Pat Chemists led to the creating of Princess Pat Twin Creams: the first, *Princess Pat Cream*, to soften and nourish the skin, the second, *Princess Pat Ice Astringent*, to close the pores.

This gives you a definite method on which to work with Nature in preserving and refining the texture of your skin.

Try this new and definite Princess Pat TWIN CREAM METHOD

1 After thoroughly cleansing the pores, feed the tissues with *Princess Pat Cream*, manipulating with upward and outward strokes of the finger-tips. This nourishes the skin to the depth of each pore. Now while the Cream remains on your skin

2 Pat the *Ice Astringent* right over the Cream. Instantly you will experience a delightfully cooling, reviving sensation. The tiny blood vessels surge to renewed action, the warm natural color floods your cheeks. Now wipe all surplus cream away. Your pores are contracted and skin texture is like velvet.

This is the only method by which the nourishment can be fed into your skin and retained all day long by your contracted pores. Follow these simple steps faithfully and you will be amazed at how quickly your skin will resume its soft, firm, fine-grained loveliness. Follow them regularly and continuously and the skin will be always beautiful.

As for powdering, you are now ready, without further preparation. Your powder will adhere as never before without the possibility of its entering and clogging the pores.

Free So that every woman may have ample opportunity to test the effectiveness of the Princess Pat Twin Cream Method on her own skin, we take pleasure in sending a generous Demonstration Packet containing *Princess Pat Cream* and *Princess Pat Ice Astringent*, entirely without charge. Just mail the coupon.



PRINCESS PAT, Ltd.
Dept. 247, 2709 S. Wells St., Chicago
Entirely free, please forward me postpaid your Demonstration Packet of Princess Pat Twin Creams.

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At Last!
Here's a Vanitie
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That Cannot
Spill

Norida
—Vanitie
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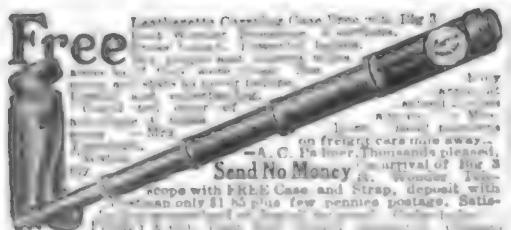
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A hand held to beauty. You will fall in love with Norida, for now you can always use your favorite loose powder—and carry it with perfect safety. It can't spill.

Norida is not a compact or a case, but it's a patented non-spilling Vanitie for your favorite loose powder.

And here is our latest creation—the Norida double Vanitie—for your favorite loose powder and rouge cake. It's an adorable mirror and two pots. It's really the most wonderful dual vanity you ever saw.

NORIDA PARFUMERIE



Deaf? A post-card brings joy of good hearing again

Amazing Invention enables deaf to hear instantly
Sent on Ten Days' Free Trial

Dear Sirs: I am a deaf person and I have been deaf since birth. I have tried many different ways to help me hear but nothing has worked. I have heard of your invention and I would like to know if it would help me. Please send me some information about your invention so I can make up my mind. Thank you.

P.S. I am a deaf person and I have been deaf since birth. I have tried many different ways to help me hear but nothing has worked. I have heard of your invention and I would like to know if it would help me. Please send me some information about your invention so I can make up my mind. Thank you.

The post-card above will be sent to you by mail.

What I Learned from Arline

[Continued from page 2]

wedding bell in the park. I learned what I had never dreamed of. He told me that he had been married out West, but that he hasn't lived with his wife for two years; that his divorce would be granted in another six months; that we would be secretly married, and any time after he got his divorce.

"We hadn't been married but about two weeks when he told me that there was a bitch in the divorce, and that his wife was coming to New York. After a few months' trip, I went away, presumably to work in a summer resort up in the Adirondacks.

WHEN I came back, little Arline was old enough to be placed over at Mrs. Chapman's Baby Farm, on Long Island. That's where I disappear to every now and then. She had the best care over there, good food and attention by a motherly old soul who's a specialist at the job. And May, that's the best place in the world I know for little May."

I started to speak, but she stopped.

"Now, wait just a minute, honey," she went on. "Just a minute. I've got more worldly experience than you have. I've got a plan that will work out best for you and May, and also I'm going to ask a favor. Am I a good enough friend to you to ask a favor, May?"

She was a good little seductress, Arline was. The tears came to my eyes, and I told her that questions like that were unnecessary after her kindness to me.

"All right, then," she said. "This is the big idea. Cabaret work gets pretty dull in the summer. I can't make a living—for the sake of that chubby little cherub over in the Baby Farm. And you can't save any money working in the store and supporting the both of us through the summer, and little May, too. So, hold your breath after I tell you. Here's the big kick."

"I've met a man who drops into the cabaret occasionally. It's Adler, who controls what's called the Western Wheel in Burlesque. He's sending out what is known as a turk's head sign show, and is going to send it out in the summer time as an experiment. The troupe will play a lot of shows in my towns through the Northwest, and end up at Vicksburg, and by that time the regular season will be on and we can double-back East. Now, don't think burlesque girls are bad girls. They're a mixed deal the same as any other girls—some good, some bad. Adler likes my singing and dancing—it's not *myself* he likes, don't worry. He wants a good class of girls for this show, the kind that'll leave their names and keep off the streets after the show in those smaller towns that are full of men. He wants serious-minded girls that'll keep in shape to do a hard day's work, matinee and night. He's offered me a contract, and I've taken it under one condition—that he signs you up, too."

A thousand objections sprang to my lips, but Arline silenced me again.

"Now, May," she lectured me, "listen to Mother here. You'll say you can't sing and you can't dance, but you don't know what you can do till you try. We get three weeks' rehearsal, with pay. Good pay, too!"

We talked it over for an hour. Arline was convincing. There was no getting around her arguments. So, next day, we went over to Mrs. Chapman's Baby Farm. A kind, motherly old lady gave us a cor-

[Turn to page 74]



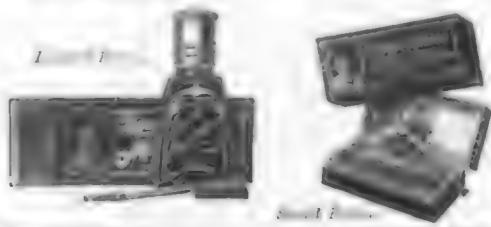
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WILL BEAUTIFY YOUR EYES INSTANTLY

A touch of MAYBELLINE works beauty wonders. Scant eyebrows and lashes are made to appear naturally dark, long and luxuriant. All the hidden loveliness of your eyes—their brilliancy, depth and expression—is instantly revealed. The difference is remarkable. Girls and women everywhere, even the most beautiful actresses of the stage and screen, now realize that MAYBELLINE is the most important aid to beauty and use it regularly. Per-

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What I Learned from Arline

(Continued from page 76)

did welcome I... to Arline for the first time. She had come to the reception room to meet her mother, and she was carrying a baby. And H. Mrs. Chapman had a full day, and I said I'd take the baby care on her. I made the required payment, and left with a heavy heart. But I felt that my Edie was in good hands, and it was easier to bear than to try to find a nurse to care for her too.

Three weeks later that the "Parisian" was presented to the experimental team, and Adler was cheering me up with her bright colors as the train pulled out.

ARLINE was right once more. There were many lost and respectable girls in that turkey burlesque show. I suppose there were some others, too, but Arline and I kept ourselves a good deal. We played three times and three nights in the larger cities then made longer jumps and played three days a week, but never for full week's salary.

I received a letter from Mrs. Chapman every week. She made the one letter about Arline and myself. Every letter was coming along nicely. The kiddies were well, and Mr. Chapman wrote, and growed on so fast that they were outgrowing their clothes and developing healthy appetites. It was phrased in such a way that I could always tell when the little parents were to be visited.

The week I visited by. We were saying things, and the babies were healthy and growing. The little bits of gossip we heard in the troupe were exciting. Some of the girls had deserted. One girl left with a man over at Butte, Montana. Another fell ill in Livingston, and Adler left her behind and paid her hospital bill. I was sorry in small part, although Arline was still in tears and dancing in the chorus.

We were playing all sorts of towns on short notice. I did not have much time for thinking. Naturally, I thought of the baby, and Joe, and I had wept a little when we passed through Sioux Falls. Of course, Elvira knew nothing about my trip or venture.

We reached New York early one morning, and had a hurried snack at Childs'. It did not take us long to get down to our 11 Twenty-first Street lodgings. The months had changed the old place.

First we made hasty, feverish arrangements. We wanted to see those babies.

Mrs. Chapman greeted us smilingly. Her smile faded when we told her we were going to take the babies out to live with us for a few weeks while we were in New York, but she was still courteous.

"Why not let the dear little children remain a couple of weeks until you're settled?" she asked. But no—I wanted away right then. Where was her room? I'd catch up and hug her.

Mrs. Chapman, however, preferred to bring the children out to the reception room. While we waited we could hear an argument going on upstairs.

"You just wait, you old bag!" we could hear plainly. "I'll show you up, you old fool!"

There were some indistinct words. We heard Mrs. Chapman's voice: "Don't forget that I've got something on you, you impudent hussy. Here I take you in—"

There was the sound of a slammed door, and we could not make out the rest.

Soon after, Mrs. Chapman came in with the children. She still wanted to keep them a couple of weeks, and said to help us out she could keep them for nothing until we got settled. She just loved the little dears! But we wanted our babies to be with us.

We paid Mrs. Chapman the balance due, and walked out to the waiting jitney-bus. There was a call of "Good-by, sweet-heart," and a tap on an upstairs window. We looked up, and a girl in a nursemaid's uniform was waving good-by at the children.

Arline planned to get a job for a few weeks, while I would be mother to both of the tots.

"We're going to have a happy time," I told her. "I'll stay home and mother the babies. By the time Adler's brother's show opens, we can put them back with Mrs. Chapman."

At the sound of the name Arline looked up rather queerly. She had a habit of "hunches"—and they were usually right.

"Did you notice anything 'phoney' about that place today?" she asked.

"You mean the argument?"

"Well, that too. But I had the feeling that Mrs. Chapman was over anxious to keep the kids for awhile, and then when she couldn't, she tried to get us out before that nursemaid opened up. You remember we waited more than half an hour and she told us we could just make the train."

"Oh, that might have been a natural mistake," I said. But doubts had assailed me, too.

The doubts became certainties the next day. Arline had gone out to see about a job when someone ran up to tell me that a lady was downstairs to see me. The news put me in a queer state of excitement. It was the nursemaid who had waved from the upstairs window of Mrs. Chapman's house.

The girl had found my address from Mrs. Chapman's records, and then she told me things that made my blood boil. She said that Mrs. Chapman had run the Baby Farm almost alone until about six months previous. She would hire no nursemaids. Then she picked up Nettie Michel—that was the nursemaid's name—in Night Court. She had been in a home for incorrigible girls, and was on probation. She told me frankly that Mrs. Chapman had something "on" her, and realizing that this would seal the girl's lips, had taken her in to care for the babies.

The doll which I had seen in the arms of Arline's girl the first day I visited there was simply a sort of stage-property. It was the only doll in the place. All this news astonished me, but the next announcement made me see red. One of the little children had broken the doll a few weeks previous, and Mrs. Chapman had whipped the child mercilessly. That was bad enough—but the child had been my child!

Of course at first I thought that Nettie might be lying—trying, perhaps, to wreak vengeance for a personal grudge. But her words rang true. She walked over to the crib and took the little rompers off of my May and showed me the fading marks of what had once been large red welts.

"But why didn't you go to the authorities?" I asked Nettie.

"Me go to the authorities!" she repeated. "That 'd be a fine place for me to go, wouldn't it now? Why, I'm on my way back to the Girls' Reformatory now if they get me. That's what shut my mouth yesterday, but I had another big fight with that old bag today and ran away."

It cost me six dollars in taxi fare, but I didn't think of that as I burst into Mrs. Chapman's house and hurled my accusations at her. Her habitual smile had now

became a sinner. She resented my intrusion and said some incomplimentary things about my character. She would not admit whipping my child, but said that if she got it she deserved it.

I can't exactly say what possessed me. I don't remember much of the next few minutes. I went mad, I guess. I remember I started by picking up a new bisque doll—one to replace the old property doll, I suppose—and crashed it to the floor.

"Now, punish me!" I yelled, as I grabbed her by the hair. She finally tore herself free and came back with a revolver. I picked up a vase and hurled it at her. There was a shot. I learned afterwards that the bullet struck her in the foot. God forgive me! At the time I wished it had gone through her heart. I remember the taxi chauffeur rushing in and asking what was the matter, and Mrs. Chapman's screech to hold me while she telephoned the police.

THE next few days were a nightmare. I was arrested on a charge of assault and forced to remain in jail all night. As soon as I was able to get in touch with Arline and disjointedly explain what had happened, she proved her friendship once more. She got Simmons to put up a bond for me, and I was released until the day of the trial. The lawyer retained by Simmons tried to have the charge withdrawn, but old Mrs. Chapman was vindictive. She finally agreed to have the charge reduced to "disorderly conduct" if we would make arrangements to have no publicity about her baby farm. I was for seeing the thing through to the limit, but the cooler-headed Arline was persuaded by the lawyer that it would be best to accept the terms. I wanted, also, to protect Arline's secret.

I sat in the court-room that stifling afternoon, and heard myself called all sorts of names which I did not deserve. I was a bad woman. I was a cheap burlesquer.

I suppose the court meant to be fair. I suppose the circumstantial evidence was all against me. But I'll never forget the severe look in that judge's eyes as he lectured me that afternoon; advised me to lead a better life, to stop drinking and to be worthy of motherhood. The bitter, ironical sting of it!

"Mrs. Chapman," he said in closing, "is a kind, respectable woman who has given her life to the faithful care of many unfortunate children—children whose sinful parents have not given them a chance to look the world in the eyes. She accepts pay for it, of course—she has to make a living. But the charges which you have falsely made against her are ridiculous. Her reputation as an honest, God-fearing woman in this community is too well established to be torn down by the lies of a woman such as you have proved yourself to be. The sentence of this court is that you be confined in the jail for sixty days!"

I fainted when I heard the sentence.

When I came to, Arline was bathing my forehead in cold water. She was an angel during my confinement in jail in jail!

Arline visited me daily, and told me she was caring for little May. She even told me other comforting lies how the baby was gaining in weight, how she had bought it a pair of blue baby-shoes, and so on.

I lost seven pounds the first few days in jail. How I hate that word! But I was destined never to finish my sentence. After all, Justice usually triumphs. Justice brought about my liberty—Justice, and Arline, and John Locke. John had sold a scenario, and had returned to his old Twenty-first Street room, but he had had a sufficient taste of the perils of freelance writing, and had gone back to his old job as reporter on a large and sensational daily. I got the details from them later. Arline had told him the whole story, and he had made a quiet investigation of Mrs. Chapman's Baby Farm. The story was one of the sensations of the month. Mrs. Chapman's Baby Farm was exposed in all its sordid detail. The old woman was arrested, later released on bail, and was believed to have left the country. My name was used, but it was my burlesque name.

My picture was published. And it was recognized by one person who once was very dear to me; one whom I still remember for the good that was in him despite his weaknesses. That person was Joe Whitney, later known merely by a number in the cell to which his mistakes had led him. Poor Joe! He was shot dead while trying to scale those relentless walls. Was he coming to me to beg my forgiveness as he had in his letters—or did he plan in his own way to free me of a man doomed for years to a living death?

* * * * *

Little Arline fell a victim to an infantile paralysis plague which swept our neighborhood. I do not want to think of that day of the funeral—the little cemetery plot, sad-faced Arline, and Mr. Simmons, also sad, standing beside that little grave as the coffin was lowered and their child disappeared from their lives. Poor Arline! Born to sorrow, and trying so hard to mask it beneath a thin veil of frivolity—a veil so thin that, though it may fool her chance acquaintances, it can never deceive me—or her own great, generous heart.

I HAVE left the stage, and two years ago became proprietress of "The Baby Shoppe." Once more I am handling soft little garments of eider-down and asking little children what Santa Claus is going to bring them. I have tried to forget what is past. Little May helps me do this—and yet, at times, she reminds me of them, too. And Arline and John Locke—I often wonder if I can ever repay them for their kindness.



Winners of the March Letter Contest

\$25.00 Prize, Pauline Grace Hunt, Los Gatos, Calif.
\$10.00 Prize, Henrietta Randegger, New York City
\$5.00 Prize, W. H. Holliday, Butte, Montana

Do you know why the above were selected by the editors as worthy of special mention and prizes? Let me tell you.

They didn't send us a letter that made us feel that we were being patted on the back to the accompanying strains of "Good work, old boy; everything in the magazine is splendidly done." They praised us, to be sure. But they so felt the spirit of THEIR magazine that they told us frankly what they didn't like, and what they preferred.

What do you think of this issue? Which is your favorite story, and why? Would you like to see more features? What about the cover?

The same prizes will be given again this month. The contest closes July 15th; prizes awarded August 1st. The editors will be the judges.

THE EDITOR.



Make This Dress in an Hour for only \$4.84

THE lovely dress shown above is just one of the famous "One Hour Dresses" that have created such a sensation.

You can make it right at home in an amazingly short time for a third of what you would pay in the shops. The only cost is \$4.84 for materials, as follows:

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½ yard 2-inch Ribbon	.14
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It would cost you at least \$15 ready-made—so you save \$10.16.

The plan for making "One Hour Dresses" was originated by the Woman's Institute and is just one feature of a new and almost magical method by which you can learn to make all of your own clothes right at home—no matter where you live—no matter how little you may know about sewing.

21 NEW DESIGNS ALL FOR 25c

The Woman's Institute has published a handsome 16-page book which gives complete step-by-step instructions for making the "One Hour Dress" shown above and 20 others just as lovely.

They are all lovely models, in the very latest style, and every step in measuring, cutting, sewing and finishing is so clearly explained and so easy to follow that you will be surprised how quickly you can make the dresses you want.

And the cost of the book containing all 21 designs is only 25c.

Just mail the coupon with 25c in coin or stamps and we'll send you a copy by return mail.



WOMAN'S INSTITUTE

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I am enclosing 25 cents. Please send me the "One Hour Dress" book, which gives complete step-by-step instructions for making the dress illustrated above and twenty others just as lovely.

Name _____ (Please specify whether Mrs. or Miss)

Address _____

House in Kowloon

[from page 57]

long and I gave my name to the Chinaman who wrapped me in impudently coarse cloth, led me into a drawing-room and disappeared. It was a vast, cool room, and I sat alone in it long enough to realize that I had never seen the sumptuousness of its interior and picture and tapestry and divans, or its rare porcelains, either in England or the Orient. And then Mrs. Bell came in. I could not believe it; she took me in her arms and kissed me affectionately.

"You poor thing!" she said. "You've got an awful headache, haven't you? It's this heat. Come up-stairs and lie on my bed for a little while and you'll feel lots better!"

I was intensely grateful to her. Mrs. Bell came up stairs with us, in spite of my protests, and I followed them into a great cool bedroom overlooking the garden at the back of the house. I dragged down on the edge of the wide bed and ran my hands over the silk cover, thinking how refreshing the jade green color of it looked to my tired hot eyes. Eva went to get me an aspirin tablet, at my request.

She came back after a moment, with a small wine glass of liquid.

"I told we haven't any aspirin; I'm sorry," she explained. "But this is a lot better, anyway." And she stood over me and put the wine glass into my hand. Its contents were thick and brown, and I sat there debating if I could overcome my distaste enough to drink it down, when, looking up, I happened to catch a wink passing between Mrs. Bell and her daughter.

My wits were nearly gone, thanks to the splitting headache, but I had just enough left to realize how queer and out of place that wink was. I put down the glass, and though they urged me with great solicitude to drink the brown stuff, saying what good it would do me, I refused. A few minutes later I was too far gone to think anything about winks, one way or another. Mrs. Bell and her daughter persuaded me to take off my dress and shoes, and slip into a negligee which they brought me. Then they dropped the slatted blinds across the window and went out and left me alone.

I MUST have lapsed into unconsciousness after that. I remember nothing for a time. It was some sort of a big fly, zooming around my head and lighting on my face, that finally roused me. Only half awake, and dizzy and sick, I found myself striking at the thing like a possessed creature. In the sticky heat in which I was sweltering, it came back again and again to torture me, and I worked myself up into a fever of passion over it! And then, while I sat on the bed, hitting out insanely every time the great fly came within arm's reach, I heard a man's voice, from somewhere down-stairs. In a second I jumped to my feet and started for the door, thinking that Miss Waldon and her friend had come. It was after three o'clock and they had promised to come at two. I was strangely glad to think they were there; at least I could call out to them from the head of the stairs.

But the door was locked! I leaned against it, dizzy from my exertion and unable to understand. I tried the handle again and again; I shook the door—but all for nothing; it was locked! Perhaps that was not the right one; perhaps I was turned around. I dashed at another door, on the next wall, and the horror that was dawning at the back of my befuddled brain, dropped away for a moment when it came open in my hand. But it opened into a clothes-closet, hung with many dresses, and I dropped on the floor in the agony of my disappointment.

Something NEW for BOBBED HAIR

There is a tremendous difference in bobs. Some are well-cut and attractive and becoming, while others, well—well, which kind is best?

I wish you could picture them to me; but I have tried—described them to the best of my knowledge, but I can't tell you what the others look like. I studied the various styles, but that's not so good, because, you know, what makes a bob attractive is not what it looks like, but how it feels. It's a new bob, and it's well-cut, and it's well-cut with the advantage of being the best of all.

You have heard of the "toy top" Golden Glint Shampoo, haven't you? It's sweet-scented, I have in mind, buy a package and see for yourself. At all drug stores, or send 25 cents to THE GOLDEN GLINT COMPANY, NEW YORK CITY.

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I sat there with my head in my hands, and my situation, which perhaps I had subconsciously suspected ever since the attack of unnatural dizziness at lunch, broke in on me now with a terrible clear light. I knew just where I was, knew that my headache and nausea were not fatigue, but a drug they had given me, and that I was fairly caught and alone and helpless!

I wanted to get up and scream and beat upon the door; to make them come and let me out! But in a minute self-control reasserted itself and I knew I must keep quiet; that I must get on my feet and walk, and not let the drowsiness overcome me! Whereupon I pulled myself up and set out to walk up and down the room, as fast as I could induce my dragging legs to carry me. There was no hope of escape out of the window; it was very high above the ground and looked out on the empty garden and the high wall of a house on the next street, tightly shuttered and evidently unoccupied. In the bathroom adjoining there was no outside door, and only a narrow window with the same outlook as my own.

Presently, longing for relief from my nausea and dizziness, I tried to make myself actively sick, but could not, and at last went back to walking the floor. How long I kept at it, I don't know. Suddenly there was a step outside and I threw myself on the bed and closed my eyes. I was just in time; Mrs. Bell and her daughter came into the room, and, for what seemed an endless time to me, stood over my bed, saying nothing. Then Mrs. Bell felt my pulse and I let myself go limp.

"She's all right, Eva," Mrs. Bell said presently, dropping my hand. "I thought perhaps we had made it too strong, or given her too much, but she'll be all right now. She probably won't wake up before six o'clock, but you'd better take your things out of here now. We'll let her have this room tonight. We'll have to be very tactful!"

Eva went around the room, gathering her possessions, opening bureau drawers and taking things out of the closet. I lay trembling on the bed, wondering desperately if I could keep from screaming while they were there. At last they went out, shutting the door quietly behind them, and I summoned my last bit of self-control to lie quiet for a few moments more, in case they should have forgotten something and come back. Then I sat up. They had taken my dress and hat and shoes and bag with them, leaving me a prisoner in a scarlet negligee!

I WAS terrified. I began to remember details about my situation that I didn't know I knew: that houses like this, where white girls were kept, were licensed in a foreign concession; that all the inmates were duly registered with the authorities; that if I spent a night in such a house, no matter under what circumstances, I should never have a chance to prove my innocence. People who keep such houses are always too powerful, too well in with the police. In the morning Mrs. Bell would go down and enter my name as an inmate, and I should never be allowed to leave! Can it be wondered that I nearly collapsed as I came to realize the full horror of my predicament?

I got up and tried the door once more. This time it was open and I tip-toed out into the hall. Down-stairs I could hear voices, but too far away to distinguish words. I went on along the hall, trying doors: one bedroom, another, a door locked on the inside, another bedroom, all large and sumptuously furnished with deep-cushioned chairs and *chaises longues* and many mirrors, and high, wide beds!

I stopped in the doorway of the third

bedroom, utterly baffled and at my wit's end. My mind was clearing, thanks to the strain it was under, but I still could not fathom what to do next, where to turn . . . Suddenly there were steps again, from behind a door which I had not yet tried, perhaps a servants' hall. I darted into the room and flung myself under the bed, gathering my gown around me as best as I could. I was just in time.

A PERSON came into the room where I was and walked past the bed. A man, a Chinese servant, I gathered from the black silk shoes and strip of bare brown ankle which I saw under the rolled trouser legs! He went over to the window and evidently adjusted the shutters, for the light in the room grew dimmer. Then he came slowly back towards the bed, and my heart was in my mouth. Did my feet protrude, or some part of the scarlet gown? He was standing close beside me and I heard the jingle of a coin. Suddenly a piece of money dropped and rolled over the rug, coming to rest beside my shoulder! I think my heart stopped beating for a full minute. He stooped and his yellow hand went groping for the money, and just by luck he touched it before he touched me! He scrambled to his feet. Somewhere, off in another part of the house, a bell had rung and he hurried out of the room—and I lay faint with weakness and fright, under the bed!

But I dragged myself up again, and out into the hall. People were coming in down-stairs, and I heard Mrs. Bell emerging from the drawing-room to meet them.

"Why, Miss Waldon, what a pleasant surprise!" she was saying. "You are just in time for tea. We're all having tea in the conservatory!"

It was the end of my nightmare! I rushed down the stairs like a crazy person, shouting as I ran: "For God's sake, get me out of here! Quick, get me out of here!"

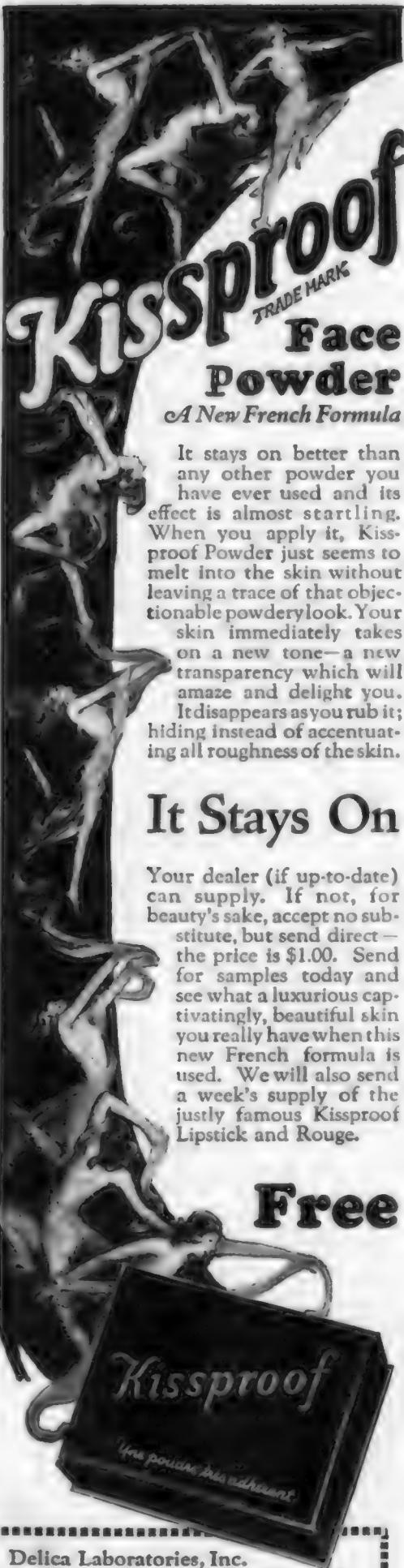
The young man who had come with Miss Waldon stood by the door, holding it open, and Miss Waldon had not moved from his side. Mrs. Bell, standing between them and the stairs, silently drew back as I rushed down and flung myself towards them. My strength was almost gone. Miss Waldon's friend picked me off my feet, carried me down the steps and into a waiting taxi. There, cowering on the floor in my scarlet draperies, and my hair tumbled down my back, secure between these two friends and en route for the hotel, I went to pieces and cried hysterically. Miss Waldon smoothed my head, and never had hands seemed so kind. She was all contrition for the fact that they hadn't come sooner.

"We were talking, and it was half-past three before we knew it. So we decided to wait and come up at tea time. My dear . . . what if something had happened to prevent our coming at all!" There were tears of pity in her eyes.

The young man broke in: "Miss Waldon didn't show me the address until just as we started. Why, the place is famous in Hong-Kong! To think of your getting caught in a house like that, and, in all innocence, asking us to have tea with you there! I knocked down a Sikh policeman. I rushed out for a taxi so fast. I think he's going to serve me with a summons."

They took me into the hotel through the servants' entrance, and up the back stairs. Miss Waldon, like the good soul she was, postponed her departure and stayed to nurse me through the nervous collapse I experienced in the next week.

My body was safe in the hotel, but my mind remained for many a day obsessed by the horror of my experience in that terrible great house in the residential section of Kowloon.



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With this new treatment results are so quick and positive that you can hardly believe your eyes. You'll simply be amazed to see how quickly sallow, "muddy" skin begins to clear and take on that fresh peach-blush tint that is the delight of masculine eyes.

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Try this new way to beauty

Every girl knows that a clear white skin is the most important requisite to beauty. Regardless of how handsome and regular your features may be, you can't have the matchless beauty that all men admire if your skin is dark, sallow or blemished. The most beautiful women of history have all had lovely, white, transparent skins—the kind you can have in just a few days if you carry out this new treatment faithfully.

Regardless of how many so-called bleaches and skin beautifiers you may have tried; no matter how many remedies, tonics and creams you may have used to no avail, this new discovery—McGowan's Presto White—will positively bring you the beauty we promise. It works on an entirely different principle from any skin bleach you've ever tried and will simply transform your skin in a few nights' time.

The reward for years of research

The ordinary skin bleach is simple enough to compound. Any chemist can make one. There are dozens on the market that give fairly good results, but none to compare with this

new scientific product. For years we have been experimenting and searching for just such a beauty aid as Presto White—a safe, sure bleaching creme that will bring out the beauty of the clear, transparent skin without the harmful effects that so often follow the use of ordinary bleaching agents.

Hundreds of preparations were tried and discarded before we finally hit upon the ideal formula, that would not only bleach and beautify the skin, but soothe and benefit it while so doing. That's the thing that distinguishes Presto White from the ordinary skin bleach—all the difference between night and day.

This remarkable new skin beautifying treatment not only includes a generous sized jar of McGowan's Presto White, but also a jar of Finishing Creme to apply mornings. Presto White bleaches the skin and removes freckles, pimples, blackheads and other blemishes—the Finishing Creme soothes the skin and offers a splendid base for powder.

If you could see what wonderful transformations this remarkable treatment is effecting every day, you'd expect us to ask at least \$5 to \$10 for it. We would be justified in doing so, for it is easily worth that much and more to any girl or woman. But we know that after all the best advertisement is the satisfied user and we are anxious to get thousands of "boosters" helping us sell this remarkable new discovery. So we are going to offer the first 10,000 treatments at just enough to cover the actual cost of making, advertising and selling, which we have figured down to \$1.87

Send no money—just sign and mail the coupon

You don't even have to pay for this treatment in advance. Simply sign and mail the coupon. Then when the postman brings your Beauty Outfit, just pay him \$1.87, plus a few cents postage. Remember, you don't take any risk. Your mirror is the sole judge. If you are not perfectly delighted with results, simply return the Outfit after five days' trial and we

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To the first 10,000 women who take advantage of this offer, we are going to include with every Outfit one of these marvelous little English Beauty Brushes, which will help immensely in getting the best results from this treatment. This dainty beauty aid is a complexion brush with a vacuum cup at the end of each tiny tentacle, which draws out the impurities and helps vanish pimples and blackheads.

will refund your money without a question. Don't put it off another minute. Mail the coupon today. If you want the beauty that is rightfully yours; if you want to clear up your skin, and do away with sallow, "muddy" complexion forever; if you want to remove freckles, blackheads and other blemishes that rob your beauty, sit right down and fill in the coupon.

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Fangs

[Continued from page 80]



The Letter That Saved Bob Johnson's Job —and paved the way for a better one!

IT was written to his employer by the International Correspondence Schools. It told how "Robert Johnson had enrolled for a course of home-study and had received a mark of 94 for his first lesson." It was sent to the manager of the Chief's office with the following postscript: "I am trembling, for a lot of men were having their pay reduced."

But as Bob came in, his employer did a surprising thing. He got up quickly from his desk and grasped him warmly by the hand.

"I want to congratulate you, young man, on the success you are making with the I.C.S. I am glad to tell you that you are training yourself not only for your present job but for the job ahead."

"I've got the pay cut. Until I received this letter, I had you in mind as one of the men to be considered. But not now. Keep on studying—keep your eyes open—and pretty soon there'll be a job for you here if you want it."

"Will the I.C.S. help you, too? Won't you be a good student? I can assure you that goes with it. I'll send the check you like best on the coupon I've enclosed to start you off. That doesn't mean you are in the lead, but it's a very fine big step forward. Do it now!"

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Without cost or obligation on my part, please tell me how I can qualify for the position or in the subject before which I have marked an X.

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- Advertising
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- Metallurgy
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- Steam Engineering
- Radio

- Architect
- Architects' Blue Prints
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Occupation _____
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of women who are making money at home
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saying now that he looked at the blood red moon through a glass just before lying down on your veranda . . ."

"Merciful God! You mean the snakes killed him?"

"Chand's largest cobra gave Zada the death bite! The others drew blood from all of his brown body. Most of them are fanged, you know, but not the big cobra! He is Chand's pet, and more sacred than ever in his eyes now. He believes the cobra avenged insulted gods!"

"How terrible!" I moaned, slumping back on my pillow. That very moment I decided Chand and his snakes must go, but I remembered that Chand was my husband's favorite. Carlyon would not send him away!

"Look at a blood-red, full moon through a glass, and you will see blood before the dawn of a new day," murmured Mrs. Moore. "My word, but it doesn't pay to scoff at superstitions," she ended.

"A snake killed Zada; not a superstition. I do not believe in them. Zada would have met his fate regardless of having looked at the moon through a glass. If we had been on the porch asleep, it might have been either one of us, or the other native, instead of Zada," I answered.

Mrs. Moore drew away from me in sudden fear, as if she were afraid to be so close to a scatterer. Four years in India had put the curse of superstitions in her own English heart.

"That's a fetching song, Billy," I said, looking across the dinner table at the sun-tanned young officer who had just finished a plaintive coon song, having accompanied himself lazily on a banjo.

"Yes, not bad. I know heaps of others like it. But they're so jolly old," he answered, helping himself to a whiskey and soda.

There was a confident air about his strong fingers as he poured from the decanter and siphoned the soda, an air that had come to him since that night in my Surrey garden. India and the open spaces, fighting and the comradeship of men, had given it to him.

Sometimes good men softened and broke in the heat of India. Others hardened and triumphed in the sun under pith helmets. Billy Travers was one of the latter. And, now, he was no longer a fair, blonde boy of England. He was man and soldier of the world. I realized this the moment we met four days before.

IT'S been a long time, Billy, since I've heard songs of any kind that make me both happy and sad. It's strange, you know, about women: they love to be both. A man likes to be contented. There's the difference. You are contented now. Will you to sit and sip your whiskey and soda while I—I want you to make me happy and sad, Billy. Sing me another, please." I begged, my heart beating like a native drum.

"Good Lord, Norah! Haven't you had enough. My repertoire is as old as the Burma hills. When a song gets out here it has whiskers on it——"

"I don't care. I could listen to you and your songs all night," I told him, my eyes seeking his. Again I remembered our kisses after the Prince's levee at Buckingham!

"That would be a bit awkward for me, eh, what? I say, my dear, have another cigarette."

I did not want a cigarette then, but seeing that his mood was not mine, I made no

further request for a song. Rising from the table, I went over to a window and looked out.

"It's a lovely night, Billy. For once there is quiet perhaps, in honor of our being together here in my house. Heavens! Look at the moon. I never saw it that color until a few nights ago. Remember what I told you of Chand: his snakes and the poor native——"

"Eh? What color, Norah?" demanded Billy, rising from the table.

"Blood-red and full," I answered, while I gazed up at the moon through the window's glass.

"Norah . . . come away from that fool window and moon," Billy cried, jerking me away. I turned swiftly at the touch of his hands against my bare arms.

SHILLY boy, you're superstitious. This poisonous country has turned you into a mystic—a believer in signs. You remember the old Hindoo twaddle about looking at a blood-red, full moon through a glass. Billy boy, this is not a night for such things. It is a night for——"

"Norah," he cut in. "I—I thought I saw something outside the window: thought I heard something."

"It's your imagination, dear."

"Nonsense. I know this country. It is a queer place. You have gone and mocked one of its superstitions in the bargain. Shall I call Chand Singh to investigate outside?"

"No—no—no! I do not want him here. He makes me think of his snakes."

"Oh, well, in any case, it is getting late. I must be going away, and back to quarters," he replied.

I did not want Billy to go away and leave me. I was lonesome. My heart was begging for him after almost two years of yearning for the love he had once offered, and I had cast aside for George Carlyon and his hopes of rank and career.

"No, not yet, Billy," I said, putting my arms around his shoulders, "Every night is so precious to me now. I could stay awake all the time to have you with me——"

"Dear old girl, you're one of the best. But, you know, we are not discreet. Although we've been seeing each other only four days, people are already commencing to talk. I don't want to get chucked out of the regiment and sent home like a naughty boy." His voice was flippant, although he affected seriousness. This flippancy cut into my breast like a dagger.

"Did it ever occur to you, Billy, that it might be far worse for me?" I snapped.

"I know it would be nasty, Norah, but——"

"But what?"

"Well, I'm a man, you know, and——"

"I am a woman. It's always worse for a woman, Billy. I am going to be utterly frank this night. The years have made my triumph of that night in the garden into ugly dust. I cared then. But I could not marry you. It had to be a man like Carlyon who could offer me a place in life. It was my pride that kept me from telling you the truth then—and—what you said about my being a woman with fangs. Oh! Billy, you know I am true to my husband in every way . . . But, I—I—care, Billy, for you——"

"I say, Norah, don't let's get sentimental. Call in Chand Singh and let him clear away. A nice thing if Carlyon were to suddenly pop in and see this rig out——"

"He does not return for a week," I answered, feeling as if Billy Travers had wounded me to the heart. Then I knew

some of the soul agony and misery I had inflicted on Ralston, Phil Comstock, and Billy, too, in my Surrey garden. For there was pain gnawing in my breast, the pain of love's yearning unrequited.

It was this pain that made my arms draw his face down close to mine. Another second and my lips were pressing against his. Then there was a soft sound of naked feet in the room. Billy and I parted, turning about in a flash.

Chand Singh was across the threshold, his back half turned toward us, making believe he had seen nothing, as all the natives do. But Chand Singh *had* seen. I knew it.

"What did you come in for?" I demanded亟ately; "I did not ring."

"I came to ask Mem Sahib if she want me more tonight."

"No, I will see Mr. Travers out. You may go to sleep."

"Good-night, Mem Sahib," returned the brown servant, passing his hand enough upon the threshold to glance briefly at Billy.

For many moments after the native had apparently disappeared, Billy and I stood together in silence. At last Billy spoke:

"I don't like that fellow, either. He's a nasty habit of making your spine feel like an ice cream. I'm certain he's not fond of me."

"I am afraid of him. Carlyon will have to send him away . . . Wait!" I whispered, going nervously to the door where I pulled back the curtain.

"What's that for?" asked Billy.

"I fancied he was behind the curtain. Ugh! Why don't they have doors in this country instead of these beastly curtains. I always fancy someone standing behind them ready to stick something into your shoulders."

"Something like this, eh?" commented Billy, taking a Mahratta dagger down from the wall.

"Be careful, dear," I implored; "it is sharp. It has the blade of a razor. Put it back, Billy."

"Righto, since my handling it frightens you. Well, I guess Chand has gone this time. Ugly brute! I saw the fellow yesterday with an enormous pet snake around his shoulders!"

"Yes, as I said, he has quite a collection, and my husband encourages him foolishly enough. I told Chand after the death of Zada that he must do away with his reptiles. He shrugged his shoulders and said there were worse things in the world than snakes. He said most of his snakes had no fangs. Chand became bold enough to say that Hindus believed women had worse fangs than snakes!"

"Gad! Let's forget such a fellow. Come Norah, give me one bit of your piano music. Then I must be off."

NO! No! Bring your banjo and let's go into my tea-room. When midnight is here, you may go. Come!" I commanded, drawing aside the curtains.

Billy Travers said he did not like my tea-room, insisting there was something uncanny about a room that had only one door of entrance and exit, and not one window.

"It's the coolest room for miles around, Billy. There is a slight opening at the top that lets in enough air, but no burning sunlight. Don't you think it's a romantic, dreamy place?"

"Romantic and dreamy enough! But too much like a prison. It stiles me," he returned.

I took a woman's way to win my point. Going to the piano, I began playing a favorite air of Billy's, a French thing of love, "Plasir d'Amour." All during my playing Billy sat in silence, smoking a cigar and sipping a new whiskey and soda. At the finish I turned to him:

"Billy, dear, run into the tea-room and fetch my handkerchief."

He got up to do my bidding, leaving his burning cigar on the edge of the supper table. In the meantime I thought I heard a strange noise outside my windows. Twice I opened them and looked out, closing them for the second time just as Billy called out he could not find the handkerchief. Answering that I would be right into help him search, I poured out a straight whiskey, drank it, and started for the passageway Chancing to turn before pulling back the curtains, I caught Chand Singh easing into the room.

"Dog, what are you doing here? Speak or I'll have you flogged tomorrow like the pig you are!"

"Mem Sahib, forgive! Mem Sahib know I love Mem Sahib. But I love Sahib more, and I wish that you will."

YOU wish that! You a serpent—a spy! Now understand me and understand well. Lieutenant Travers has gone. He left ten minutes ago by this window. understand? He's gone!" My voice was hoarse with rage and fear.

"Mem Sahib, I understand," he ordered.

"Then begone. If you annoy me again tonight, out you go, bag and baggage. I will send you into the jungle to starve. You understand?"

The native fell at my trembling knees, his hands stretching out to lift up my skirt. Before I could stop him, he had pressed the garments hem against his brown lips, muttering:

"Mem Sahib, I understand. I go."

I stood in my tracks and watched him go out of the room like a whipped dog. I wondered, however, if he were only playing a part, for he knew my husband would take his side in the long run. Just as I faced about to return to Billy, he called me. I would have rushed to his side, if the sound of a horse's hoofs, and the clink of spurs had not suddenly drummed and tinkled in my ears. A horrible fear seized me. At that very moment Chand Singh reentered the room. Never before had I seen him so excited. Never had he moved so swiftly!

"Mem Sahib! Mem Sahib!" he wailed in terror.

"Yes! Yes! What is it now?" I demanded.

"The Sahib. He come back!"

I rushed to the windows and peered through the shutters. My God! It was Carlyon! He was dismounting in front of the bungalow! There seemed only one thing to do. I ran to the tea-room to warn Billy that my husband had returned home unexpectedly. Of course, he could not escape until I got Carlyon out of the way. But it was better for him to know the terrible truth of my husband's presence.

A few words, each one almost incoherent, and I returned to the living room to affect surprise at being disturbed in the midst of a light nap. Such was to be my story!

"Carlyon!" I exclaimed, as if just awakened, and not in my full senses.

"Well, dear, do I frighten you?"

"No! No! I yes that is to say. I was asleep and . . ."

"Asleep in your tea-gown, dear! How extraordinary foolish!" he said, taking me in his arms and kissing me.

At the touch of his lips, the words of Chand Singh, spoken a few days before, came back to me. He had said there were worse things than snakes in the world. He had meant women of my kind. Liars! Deceivers! Hypocrites! Yes, like a snake I had fangs, too. Mine had never been taken from me. There I was sinking them into the heart of my husband. He loved me. He had given me everything; had trusted me always. A fire of remorse



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Drawing "Bye" with a smile, he walked at.

This was the first time a man had kissed me, besides Oliver. I did not know what to think. I felt horrified, then angry. Then after awhile I understood. I told myself Elmer had kissed me just as Dot kissed him for old times' sake. He was a writer, a sort of Bohemian, and it meant nothing from him or to him.

But I decided it wouldn't happen again!

When Elmer came again, early one afternoon, we took a long walk in the park. We went into a little tea shop and had tea and little cakes. He brought me flowers. It was so delightful! Such fun! He told little stories of people he knew, and made comments on my clothes. Oliver never noticed my clothes since the day we married, of course. Elmer said, "I like that trill on the wrists, Fros," touching my hands. "It suits you." And he held my hand till I drew it away.

It made me uncomfortable. I was silent all the way home.

In the hallway of our small apartment he came over suddenly, and took me in his arms roughly and kissed me twice. He held me in his arms so close that for a moment it seemed we weren't two people, but one, and something big, frightening, tremendous, swept over me, making me so weak, making my very mouth tremble. It had never happened to me before.

I only know that this sweeping torrent had not come over me when Oliver's lips quietly touched mine. Oh, I suppose I was wicked—wicked. But I could feel the steel of Elmer's arms about me, and the great shield of his chest; I looked up and, for a moment, didn't seem to remember who he was, or who I was. Then I felt something salt on my lips. I was crying —

That brought me to myself. I tried to draw away. But he held me only closer. His eyes laughed down to mine, his lips were close to mine. He said, "You want me to kiss you, you Little Lady of the Lost Book!"

You see, I am telling the truth. I am not trying to understand it all.

He promised me at last never to come again. But he did. And Oliver was glad to have him come. "You knew him so long," he said; "he's like a brother to you." He made us go out together. I don't think Oliver thought I was a woman to other men; that I was pretty in their eyes. I was married.

SOMETIMES Oliver fell asleep in his chair while Elmer walked about our room, talking, telling me what he'd seen and done, of voyages he'd made, of women in strange cities in many lands he had known. Elmer would look at Oliver lying frail and thin in his chair, asleep, and he would look at me and smile very intimately, trying to meet my eyes. I was almost afraid to meet his eyes.

Once I went to Oliver, put my hand in his, and my head on his breast. I hoped he'd hold me—hold me— But he said, "Tired, dear? I am, too. Seems as if I always am tired. Middle-aged, eh? Think I'll go to bed while you read."

One evening Elmer and Dot and I went to a play, a typical play from New York, full of pretty girls in no clothes to speak of, and music, and witty lines. I guess my folks at home would have been shocked by it.

After the play we went to Dot's for supper. Other folks came in. There was wine, and a girl sang, and then we all danced. I dance very well, but Oliver does

not dance. I had not danced since we were married at home, because he did not; but here I did, and it was like being a girl again. Elmer and I danced out into the hall of Dot's apartment, and there, in the dark, he kissed me again. A strange kiss that was. I kissed him, too.

After that, it was no use pretending that I wanted to see Elmer because he was "like a brother to me," an old friend. We saw each other all the time. We went to theatres and movies together. But no one seemed to understand. It was because of Oliver they didn't. Oliver always waited up for me if he came home first, always talked to Elmer a moment or so, before he went to our room. And I would sit, listening to Elmer, after Oliver went away. And then, when Elmer had gone, I would go to bed, and think and think.

I waited, and was afraid. Elmer wanted me to come to his studio. I didn't answer at first. But Elmer could talk, and talk, in his deep voice, so that it seemed as if it was a sin not to go . . .

HE ASKED me to come on a Wednesday.

That afternoon I went to a matinee, and sat through without understanding a word. When I got out it was dusk, and I walked all the way from the theatre to Elmer's studio.

He stood up as he saw me, drew me in, and closed the door. "Dear, dear, little lavender girl," he whispered. "Take off your hat." I hesitated, and he drew me to him and kissed me. I knew then I did not want Elmer— Only something that Elmer seemed to represent—

Oliver had left before I woke, and on the little notebook near the telephone had left a message. He said he would call me up at seven.

Suddenly in the little room next to the big one where Elmer and I stood, a tiny clock was sounding, in chimes. One-two-three. They were the quarter hours.

"It's six forty-five?" I said. I think I said that.

But before he could say a word, I was at the door. "The telephone—" I was on the stairs. I was outdoors. Romance? Lavender-bound book? Oh, what had I been doing? Had I not written the book of my life when I gave Oliver my promise to "love, to honor," for "better, for worse"? What were Elmer and I writing in the book of my life?

I do not know how I got home. A taxi, I think, raced like wildfire at my frenzied plea.

In our hall I heard a faint tinkle, tinkle. I raced up the stairs. I found my key, fumbled at the door. The bell was still ringing. "Don't ring off, don't ring off." I only knew I must talk to Oliver, must speak to Oliver.

I was inside, and I was talking to Oliver.

I heard myself say, "Hello." And I listened. I spoke a little word now and then. No, I wasn't going out. Yes, I meant to stay in. I heard Oliver say he'd try to be home before ten. "Good-by."

When I put down the receiver I saw that I had made a great scratch with the key, still in my hand, on the polished surface of the little tabouret while I talked.

That is the mark of this experience. It is the only mark. I never saw Elmer again after that evening.

But now I am to have something to live for—something I've wanted always. I will find the romance, and the hope, and the dreams of my girlhood in my child. I think many a wife has done that before me, whose marriage has been like mine.



The names of the winners in the MIDNIGHT story contest will be announced next month!



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By Edna Wallace Hopper

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All She Wanted

[continued from page 27]

one over early and help her get ready for the sociable." She always liked the way I could comb her hair.

At six o'clock we had her ready. Davie was to call for her at seven, so she went into the front parlor, alone, to wait. Girls with their dreams like to be alone. I have to teach.

At seven o'clock I had to leave, or run the risk of being late when my own sweet-heart would ring our bell. I came away, leaving Sallie sitting close to the window, staring straight ahead.

Seven-thirty was the hour for the sociable. I hurriedly dressed, arriving at the church parlors on time. So glad was I that my betrothed was in town at the time, and it more than doubled my joy to be able to appear in public with him, and have everybody know he was going to be mine!

Everybody that "was anybody" turned out for the minister's welcome that night. I expected to find Davie and Sallie there when I arrived. Of all the faces that appeared in the doorway—and I never saw the church packed as on that night—the honored guests alone seemed missing. What could have happened to Davie and Sallie? I was getting frantic.

At first no one seemed to observe how long overdue they were. Then I began to hear whispered comments and criticism. It was forgivable on Sallie's part to be a little tardy, for what girl wouldn't be shy about facing this group, knowing that their words of congratulation and well-wishing would not be unaccompanied by a generous portion of envy? But could anything warrant being an hour late, at a formal occasion? Shouldn't Davie take a sterner hand with her, right at the beginning?

At first whispers; now open-voiced criticism of this breach of etiquette. Just as the deacons were considering sending a committee to the minister's home to learn the cause of his non-appearance, I saw Sallie's mother slip timidly into the room and close the door. She was wearing the new gray dress, her small black bonnet, and a black silk shoulder cape. Her face had the color of sifted ashes, except for two bright spots of red high on her cheeks. I had known Mrs. Perkins all my life, appreciating her quiet and reserve, but little did I suspect her of the poise which she showed as she greeted us and explained with brief dignity that something unavoidable had happened so that David and Sarah would not be able to come. Turning quickly, she said good-night and departed.

MY ESCORT and I slipped away just as soon as possible. I longed to run to Sallie to learn the cause of this terrible ending to an event which had seemed so beautiful in anticipation, but when we got there, the Perkins home was dark.

Next morning, when I hurried over, I found her in her mother's bed, with traces of a flood of tears on her cheeks. In a torrent she blurted out her wrongs! Her creed of honor and insult were as uncompromising as unsophisticated youth and provincial life could make them. No word of her mother's or mine could offer comfort; no possible explanation reach her ear. One fact, and one fact only: Davie had deserted her on the night when she was to be presented, formally, to the church officials and congregation as his future wife.

"What girl's pride could forgive that?" she sobbed.

While I was sitting there, Mrs. Perkins hustled upstairs to tell us that Davie had just arrived and wanted Sallie to hurry and dress and come down.

Sallie sent down the message that he was never to come to her house again. Watching her face, I could guess something of the cost of that answer. "Please, Mother, I know best," was her only reply to her mother's cautioning reproach.

David Towner was also a grandchild of New England, with pridefully as stubborn as that of Sarah. Neighbors would not see him turned away twice, from the door of the girl he expected to marry. From my peck-hole at the side of the bedroom window I saw him walk away, head erect, and not turning back!

I could see that Sallie wanted to be alone. So I kissed her burning face and held my cheek against her throbbing temples.

ON MY way downtown, next morning, I overtook Mrs. Perkins on her way to the meat market and grocery store. We stopped at the post office, as was the custom of every early morning marketer in our town. I remember, just as well, the smile on the clerk's face at the general delivery window as he handed her that letter! Not much mail came to the Perkins home, except the Government's monthly pension check, now that David was home from college. She looked at the handwriting, and gave me a look that said, "The groceries can wait."

"Do come with me, dear," she urged. "I am sure this is good news."

Just as soon as we were within their closed door, she called, "Sallie, Sallie dear, here's a letter from Davie."

There was no answer. Mrs. Perkins, plump, middle-aged, and short of breath, puffed up the narrow, steep, enclosed staircase. What joy it would be to awaken Sallie!

But Sallie was not asleep. Neither was she in tears. The first tumult of grief had been spent, leaving her cold and dry-eyed. Staring out of the window at the apple-blossoms, she lay, and when her mother and I came into the room she did not turn her head.

"Honey," said the breathless mother, "you didn't hear Mamma. I said I have a letter from Davie."

"I heard you, Mamma. Keep it. I don't want it."

"Don't want it? Well, Sallie Perkins, you do beat me! Crying your eyes out because he didn't come for you, or send any word, and now you won't see him or even read his letter. I was never like that with your father when he was courting. Girls had more sense in my day." Laying the letter on the bureau, she went out of the room, with step not as light as when she entered.

Sallie waited until she heard her mother's step at the foot of the stairs, then turned her face toward the door. Surprise, and not any great amount of pleasure, were expressed at seeing me.

I handed her the letter. Twisting it, turning it, raising it to the light to see what words might be legible through the envelope, pausing as if to open it, she then suddenly shoved it back into my hand.

"No, I won't," she said, fiercely. "I might forgive him if I did! Put it back, and just leave me for a while, if you don't mind."

"I'm sorry, Sallie," I told her, and did as she asked.

Late in the afternoon, Sallie's mother stopped at our house, on the way downtown, and called me out in the hall to show the envelope she had been instructed to put in the mail. It was a letter addressed to the Rev. David H. Towner and contained his unopened missive of the day before.

"I wish you had been able to coax her to read it," she spoke sadly, "for she is so young and stubborn, and foolishly proud."

I put my arms around her and held my check against hers. "You know Sallie," I reminded her. "When she makes up her mind, it is no use."

"Yes, I know. Her father was like that." She went on her way.

I did not go over to see them again that week. Finally, Sallie ran over to our house, her old friendly self, but with her thoughts still locked tight. All she told me was that on that very day her mother had brought from the post office David's original letter, restamped and remailed, with this admission, in small letters, written on the back of the envelope: "Some day you must read this and understand."

When my father came home from the barber shop that night, after his weekly shave, he brought the news that David Towner had resigned from his church, without explanation, leaving town immediately.

IT WAS soon afterwards that our family moved away from Charles City, and busy with the hastening preparations for my own marriage, I lost track of Sallie and the home town folks. I often thought of her, during the early years of my own rich happiness, hoping that she too was similarly blessed. I could scarcely believe that stubborn pride would keep them forever separated. Surely love would be fulfilled in time.

Gradually the memory of those early days dimmed. But how vividly they were recalled on that afternoon when I came face to face with my old chum, in the Old Ladies Home! And how precious, now, are the recollections of the hours we spent together this past year! It was during these afternoon visits that, little by little, she told me the story of her life, since we separated.

Each spring found her with a few more gray hairs, she said, and her mirror showed her cheeks growing in length as they lost in plumpness. The transformation of Sallie into Sarah was gradual, she told me, and later into Miss Perkins, but it was symbolic. "Disappointed in love" and "jilted," the two most odious phrases known to the small town's womanhood, she knew were being linked with her name, and in each telling of the story the townsfolk added something mysterious concerning the young minister who gave up his church and went away never to come back.

After Mrs. Perkins died, Sarah lived alone. She did sewing for people until the rheumatism got too bad to brave all kinds of weather. Iowa's rain, snow, slush, and mud became too much for her. For a long time she struggled to maintain her home and provide the slight necessities of food and clothing. Gradually her savings dwindled and she had no way of earning.

Deep was the concern among her friends. I am told, but the Perkins pride was well known in that community, and none dared offer charity. I doubt if I would have myself, had I been there!

Finally, Sarah said, the minister visited her and explained the plan of the Church Hospital and Home for the Aged, at Des Moines, where she might remain as long as she lived. She was not to consider herself an object of charity. This home for aged women of refinement, like herself, was maintained for members of families who had always supported the church, and thus in their later years had earned the right to accept of the church's gratitude and bounty.

This prayerful little woman always had trusted the words of her pastor, so eventually she accepted his invitation in behalf of the welcoming Home. She was persuaded to sell her cottage, for a few hundred dollars, assigning the money to

the Church Home Fund in return for the pledge of good care for the remainder of her life.

Always cheery, with a word of encouragement to the afflicted and with thoughtful kindness to the lonely,—that was the institutional life of "Auntie Perkins," so the nurses told me.

It is just a week now since I received that telephone message, asking me to hurry over to the Home. In great haste I went, for how was I to know that she was beyond all need of me?

The little nurse met me at the door and pressed my hand. Then I guessed, for the first time, the real meaning of this call. Before I had entered her room and beheld what I did, I knew that my dear friend Sallie was dead. The hush was on us, even as on that chamber, as we entered. So dear it was with its many memories of her! After I had looked long into the sweet face, now in beautiful repose, the nurse opened the bureau drawer, saying, "Please take these away from here and keep them. You were her dearest friend. You are the only one who should know. These are as I found them, today, when I found—her." Her voice was tear-choked. We both stood there silently crying.

Those revealing tokens of a lifetime!

The box with its red ribbon that showed much knotting and unknotting. The bundle of David's letters, written during his schooling at the Seminary: a small folding fan with their names written together, as a memento of their first pilgrimage to the ice-cream parlor; a pressed red clover blossom; a Testament, his Christmas present on her fifteenth birthday; a daguerreotype, framed in brown leather, of a young man's face with neatly parted hair; a yellowed newspaper clipping telling of the resignation and departure of the young minister from Charles City; another, dated much later, announcing the rise of the distinguished clergyman to the bishopric; and on top of all, the double-stamped letter with its command written on the envelope flap.

This letter, yellowed with age, but only this day cut with trembling scissors, lay in Sallie's lap when the nurse found her lifeless. Just dropped from her fingers, also, was a newspaper clipping of that very day. I can see it all just as plainly as if I had been there! Sallie had come across the last story of David, in the day's news, and after reading it, she intended to put it away with the other keepsakes in memory's corner. Opening her box, she had picked up the long unopened letter, with the challenge that she had denied for nearly half a century, and at last had yielded to its demand. "Some day you must read this and understand," he had written.

I can hear her say, "Now is the time."

NO ONE can tell how far she had read before her heart-strings snapped. At last, surely, she knew that Davie loved her and was true. Knowing that, what reason was there longer to live?

The newspaper clipping from the *Chicago Tribune* of that date is given here:

Dayton, Ohio, October 29—The Rev. David Harlon Towner, aged sixty-eight years, died here today, after an illness of one week. For twenty years he had been a Bishop of the —— Church. He leaves no relatives and he never married. Interment will take place at the town of his birth, Charles City, Iowa.

And here is the letter which finally fulfilled its mission of understanding:

Sallie dear:

You cannot realize my grief and shame at not being able to come for you on Tuesday night. But surely you understood that something unavoidable



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able had happened and that I was unable to act toward you. Dearest, you must know I act that way to you, and I have stayed away of my own accord.

I am so sorry you would not come to see me, for I could have explained so much better words than in writing. But I am trying to make you understand now, the best that I can to you.

I went out to my Aunt Erna's, on the farm, Monday afternoon, and she and Uncle John asked me to stay all night. It seemed so good to get out there again, for you know that was always home to me, after my folks died. Early Tuesday morning Uncle John drove to town and he didn't come back until five o'clock in the afternoon. I was getting more worried all the time, for I was going to walk in those four miles, and I was afraid I would be late for you. I couldn't leave Aunt Erna alone, for I had promised Uncle John to wait until he came back. When he drove into the yard the team was running so that we knew something was wrong. He didn't stop to unhitch but came right in from the barn. As he stepped inside the kitchen door, where Aunt Erna was cooking supper, he grabbed a shot-gun and leveled it at her.

Knowing this mania, I was paralyzed with agony when I saw him come into the room with that loaded gun. He held it steadily—for though he may be dead intoxicated, his hand never shakes—and commanded both of us to stand where we were: not to move, or he would shoot! The barrel was pointed straight at Aunt Erna, and I knew that the least move of mine would mean pulling the trigger. It was obey this crazy edict, or death for the aunt I loved like a mother.

And so, throughout the dragging hours of the evening and until long into the desperate night, there we stood, pale, weak, and trembling, but not dar-

ing to move. Each minute I feared that Aunt Erna would faint. But she stood motionless, in peace, her face stricken with compassionate love for the man who was afflicted with this uncontrollable, incurable mental disease.

Eight o'clock came and still there was no sign of Uncle John. I thought of you and what you would be doing, and thin'ning. But I also prayed and yes, believed, that you might understand and keep faith. I thought of the church people who would be waiting for us, wondering why we did not come. Yet they would never know!

At eleven o'clock Uncle John fell asleep. I took the gun from his rigid hand and we undressed him and put him to bed. I stayed with Aunt Erna until after midnight. With heavy heart I walked back to town.

The rest you know, dear. Please, please don't keep me from seeing you. No matter what you think of me, or no matter what anybody says or asks you, you must never tell them why I could not come. It would break Aunt Erna's heart. We cannot betray her trust!

Now that you know my reason for breaking my appointment with you and the church, Sallie, you will surely forgive me. You see, don't you, that there was no other way?

Please tell me you take me back into your heart. God bless you, sweetheart. You may not forgive me, but you cannot keep me from always loving you.

Your devoted

David

There remains only one service I can perform for my dearest life-time friend. Sallie was laid to rest in the home-town cemetery, beside the returned minister. The stone marking her grave will read:

"His promised bride. True in life and death."



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Are you willing to cooperate with us to make this plan succeed?

Selling Goods to Henry

[Continued from page 70]

was no sign of them, so I figured they were probably out, or maybe indoors somewhere. After chatting a little while longer, I went on my way.

It must have been about a week after that meeting of ours, that I hired a girl, and all Danville was up in arms about it.

This girl's name was Faith Harland, and a sweeter, prettier girl never drew breath. She was a tiny little thing, with the softest brown hair, and big, violet eyes, that had once been laughing and gay, but were now red-rimmed and sorrowful.

Her story was as old as the hills, and very pitiful. She had worked for me two years previously, as a cash-girl. She was just seventeen then, and full of fun and mischief. She wasn't strong on discipline, I must say, but it did me good to hear her laughing with the other girls. Well, to make a long story short, she had become infatuated with a traveling man. She loved him, truly, but he was a coward and a cad. When she ran away and married him secretly, her youth, her love, her faith, she gave. He flung them all back into her face and left her.

THIS child was left stranded, and how she ever came through alive with her little baby is more than I know. Every hand was against her. The parents, who had christened her Faith, refused to have anything to do with her.

Now, I'd known that little girl pretty well before she had her troubles. She was a good girl, and a sweet girl. She wouldn't do a dishonest or an unkind thing. There was no more sin in her than there is in a baby that falls on the sidewalk and skins its knee. Life gave her a raw deal, and that's all there was to it.

However, when I gave her a job again, there was more fuss than if I'd turned a dozen lepers loose in the store. My sister, who keeps house for me, and usually has the good sense to keep her own counsel, even spoke against it.

I put Faith in the toy department. I figured that most of the customers there would be mothers or fathers, and that if they knew about Faith, they'd be less likely to condemn. And they probably would know about her, anyway. All Danville did.

It's amazing how a little thing like that will affect business. For three months following, my sales fell off as much as eight per cent.

I don't know what people expected of Faith. Maybe they thought she ought to wear sackcloth and ashes all the time, and never to speak above a whisper. Anyway, they seemed to resent the fact that she tried to be natural and cheerful. And when she spoke to the other girls about her baby, as every normal young mother will, they seemed to think it positively indecent.

One day I went up to see how she was making out, and I saw her selling goods to Henry. She was showing him how a toy circus worked, and I bet she enjoyed it herself as much as any child would. She was laughing just like a happy kid. When I came on the scene, they shifted their interest to the dolls. Henry looked more nervous than I'd seen him for a long time. He had his hands behind his back, and all the time he was clasping and unclasping them, and then wiping them along the side of his coat.

I went up and spoke to him, as I hadn't seen him for some time. He greeted me with his familiar smile, and then turned to Faith and ordered her to send the toy as soon as possible. He then followed me through the department, and at my invitation, came along to the office for a smoke.

I'd known Henry now for quite a while, and I liked him a whole lot. We'd had lunch together several times, and I'd found out more about him.

Apparently he'd been very poor until a few years ago. Then he inherited money from some distant relative, and he'd bought an interest in a very profitable coal and lumber business. After that he'd bought the house on Walnut Avenue, and married

We started smoking, and chatted of this and that, and presently the topic of Faith came up. The Danville papers had been full of it, her parents being high up in church circles. It appeared that Henry had read and heard quite a lot about it.

"Did you notice the girl who served you just now, Mr. Bream?" I asked.

"Er—er—not particularly!" said Henry, in a rather careless tone.

"That was Faith," I told him. "Poor little girl! Life's been hard for her—and it's going to be harder."

"She seemed a very nice girl," said Henry.

"She's a very sweet little girl," I told him, "but because she made a big mistake, there'll be very little happiness in her life, I'm afraid."

"Oh!" said Henry, in his gentle, low-pitched voice, "don't you think that perhaps, one day, maybe—some man will—" His voice trailed off, and he left the sentence in mid-air. I shook my head. I know my Danville.

"No, Mr. Bream," I said, "I'm afraid not. There's not many men who'd want to marry a girl like that. Take yourself, for instance. Would you have married a girl in her position? Eh? Would you? With so many young, sweet girls, who are quite innocent to choose from?"

Henry pulled at his pipe, and said nothing.

"By the way, how are Mrs. Bream and the little girl?" I asked. Henry started, and then began nervously to fumble with his gloves. "They're very well, thank you." He looked at me, wrinkling his brows, and I wondered what he was thinking about.

We chatted a bit longer, and then Henry said that it was time for him to go home. "It's my little girl's birthday tomorrow," he said with a smile, "and my wife is arranging something and wants me to help her."

As he left my office I glanced at the calendar. It was September third. Now, if there's one thing I pride myself on more than another it's my memory for dates. Suddenly I remembered selling Henry a doll's house the previous year for his child's birthday, and I recalled the date immediately. He had bought it on the Twenty-fifth of November. I remember commenting on the fact that the birthday came exactly one month before Christmas.

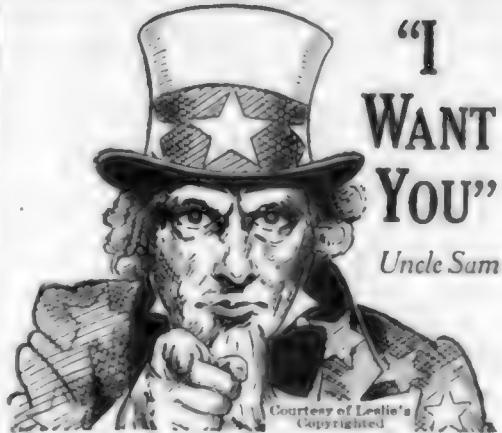
I PUZZLED over this for several minutes, and almost rang for the girl to bring me the files where I could have traced the purchase definitely. Then I decided that I must have been mistaken after all, and I dismissed it from my mind.

I went back to the toy department, where I had some business, and while waiting for the manager to get me some figures, I went over and talked to Faith.

She mentioned Henry's name almost at once, and said that he must be a wonderful husband and father.

"Have you served him before?" I asked, surprised.

"Oh, yes! He comes up here nearly every day," she answered. "I think he's the kindest, nicest man I've ever seen. Look what he brought today!" and she produced



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I a large parcel from under the counter, and showed me some very pretty baby clothes. He said that his little girl wore those when she was a baby, and that his wife had asked him to bring them to me; he added he was not to be offended, but he thought that maybe my little baby could wear them—if I would take them." Her eyes were moist with tears as she told me this, and her face was quite flushed. "Don't you think it was awfully kind of him, Mr. Toomey?" she asked; "and it wasn't wrong of me to accept them—was it?"

I patted her hand, and went back to my office very puzzled. It was certainly mighty kind of Henry, but there was one thing I couldn't understand. Those baby clothes must have been bought in my store less than a month ago. I recognized them immediately. They were part of a manufacturer's stock that I had bought outright, and there was nothing else like them on the market.

I DECIDED to wait for developments. I didn't have to wait long. Henry came to the toy department the next day, and the next, and the next after that. Each time he waited until Faith could serve him, and then he spent about an hour talking to her. Each time he bought a small toy for about fifty cents.

Usually I pay no attention whatsoever to gossip. But within a few weeks the whole store seemed to have the story that funny little Mr. Bream had a crush on Faith. I decided that it was time to do something. I moved Faith to the ladies' underwear department, figuring that if there was any truth in this gossip, Henry would never have the nerve to follow her into that embarrassing quarter.

That very same day he came to my office. He was extremely nervous, and I didn't help matters—purposely—by staring at him for several seconds before I rose to greet him.

"How is Mrs. Bream?" I asked rather pointedly, almost at the outset of our conversation. Henry blushed, and began to stammer.

"Er—um—er—she's not so well. I'm afraid. She has—er—she has a very bad—er—cold."

"I'm sorry to hear that," I said. There was a long pause, while I waited for him to break the silence.

"She sent me here to buy something for her," he burst out suddenly, "and I don't like to do it. You may perhaps have noticed, Mr. Toomey, that I am—er—rather apt—er—to be shy, and so, I wonder if perhaps you would—er—" He seemed hopelessly flustered.

"What is it she wants?" I asked. He looked around, and gulped once or twice, most unhappily.

"Some—er—silk—er—nightgowns—and—er—other things!" he blurted out, miserably. I scratched my head and looked at him sharply.

"Why doesn't Mrs. Bream telephone?" I inquired. "You know we'll be very glad to send anything she asks for—on approval."

"I thought of that," said Henry, immediately, "but she is so particular, and she wants these things so badly, and of course I know exactly what she likes and what she doesn't like, so you see—I thought—er—that if you—"

"I think I understand, Mr. Bream," I said. "You don't like the idea of going into the ladies' underwear department alone—and you'd like me to chaperone you—is that right?" And I smiled broadly. Henry gave a little nervous laugh and said that that was what he had in mind.

So I piloted him to the department, and turned him over to one of the salesgirls—not Faith—and then, from behind a row of dummies, I kept my eye on him. He paid

practically no attention to his purchase, and all the time he gazed at Faith with a sort of dog-like ardor that was half amusing and half pathetic. Faith blushed and smiled. She looked very pretty.

Godness only knows what Henry thought that night. The salesgirl thought she'd fallen upon a gold mine. Everything she showed him he said he'd take. I figured this was going to be a pretty expensive little flirtation of Henry's, and I wondered what his wife would say when he arrived home with such an outfit.

I was worried. I didn't know how to tackle the matter. After all, I had nothing tangible on which to go.

Finally I decided that I would wait until I met Henry again, and then I would speak to him. He seemed to like me, and had often told me how he enjoyed our talks. It seems he had very few friends.

At least ten days went by, and there was no sign of Henry. I felt rather sorry for him. I thought that maybe some gossip had reached his wife and that she was squelching him. He looked the sort of husband whom a wife could easily intimidate.

Then the first of December came along, and Henry received his monthly statement like all the rest. Now, one of the things I'd noticed about him was the fact that he always paid his account within two or three days.

Consequently when a week went by without any sign from Henry, I began to wonder what could be the matter. I went to different departments to ask if anybody had seen him, but it appeared that he had not been inside the store since the day he bought all that underwear for his wife. I spoke to Faith, and asked her if she had seen him, perhaps, and she got quite pale and said: "No, I haven't! Oh, I do hope he isn't ill?" I looked at her rather searchingly, and asked her if she had any reason for asking that question. She flushed and said: "He told me once that he was very delicate, and liable to catch cold easily—and I thought after this blizzard we've had—I was afraid maybe he wasn't well!"

When I got back to my desk I was really worried. I decided to ring him up at his office, and ask him if he were all right. I thought I knew him well enough to do that.

A man answered the telephone—a clerk I suppose.

"I want to speak to Mr. Bream," I said.
"Who is it wants him?"
"A personal friend—Mr. Toomey."

HE'S not here," said the clerk: "he's been away a couple of weeks."
"Is he out of town?" I asked.

"No! He's home—very sick—had pneumonia, I think."

I rang off hurriedly and was soon calling his residence number.

I heard the bell ringing for several minutes before there was that loud click in the phone which announces that the other party has picked up the receiver.

"Hello!" came a voice over the wire. It was very weak, and very faint, but it was Henry's voice all right. I breathed a sigh of relief. During those minutes of waiting I had trembled with the thought that the poor little man might be dead.

"Hello, Mr. Bream!" I shouted. "This is your friend, Mr. Toomey, speaking. Say, I just rang your office, and they told me you'd been sick. How are you?"

"I'm very well," said Henry, so weakly that I could hardly hear him. "It's very good of you to ring up. But you must excuse me, Mr. Toomey, for my negligence in the matter of my account. I would have sent you a check before now, but—"

"Well, Mr. Bream!" I cut in. "I hope you don't think I rang up about that, do you? I just rang up to say how very sorry

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I was that you had been so ill, and to ask if there was anything I could do for you." I waited for him to make some answer, but he said nothing. I called "Hello!" into the mouthpiece several times, but Henry made no response.

Thinking that we must have been cut off, I signaled the operator, and asked her for the number again, but she replied: "You are still connected with your party." I was just puzzling over this, and calling "Hello!" again when I distinctly heard a crash, as if someone had knocked over a small table or something. I could hear the tinkle of glass.

Then I realized that Henry must have fainted. Probably the exertion of lifting the telephone had been too much for him. I waited several minutes and then rang again. I figured that by that time his wife would have seen to him, and replaced the receiver. But the operator gave me the same reply. Apparently the receiver was still dangling from its cord. The line buzzed and hummed faintly, inscrutably.

Although I could hardly believe that Mrs. Bream would leave an invalid alone in the house, I realized that it was just possible that she had taken the little girl out for a walk. I snatched my hat and coat, ran down to the alley where I always parked my car, and within a few minutes was on my way to Walnut Avenue.

I RUSHED breathlessly up to the front door of Henry's house, quite prepared to laugh with Mrs. Bream at my unnecessary alarm and excitement.

The bell pealed through the house, and I waited impatiently, beating the palms of my hands together to take out the cold stiffness. There was no answer. I rang again, this time for quite thirty seconds. The house remained absolutely silent. I beat on the glass panels of the door with my fists, and kicked the woodwork. The noise I made ought to have awakened the dead, I thought. Then, when I realized that Mrs. Bream was not in, I wasted no more time. I put my shoulder to the door, and in three shoves I had the satisfaction of hearing the lock give. I smashed my way in, and stood in the pretty little hall of Henry's house.

"Mr. Bream!" I yelled at the top of my lungs. "Mr. Bream! Henry!" There was no answer. I dashed up the stair-case three steps at a time.

I found him in the front room. I will never forget what a pitiful sight he presented. He was as thin as a rake, and deathly white. He lay across the bed, on his back, while the telephone lay on the floor amid a debris of broken china and glass. He had apparently been leaning on the table when he answered my call, and the frail bamboo affair had collapsed.

He had only fainted. When I got him straightened out in bed his pulse was weak but regular. I quickly signalled the telephone operator, and called my personal doctor, telling him to come up at once.

Then I set to work to revive Henry. I found a bottle of brandy on another table, and mixed him a stiff drink, which I forced between his lips. Meanwhile I slapped his hands, and fanned him. Maybe a woman could have done it better. I did the best I could. Anyway, after several minutes his eyes began to flutter, and presently he came round completely. I promptly gave him another stiff brandy, because most of the other had gone on the bed, anyway.

He looked at me gratefully, but with a sort of frightened, hunted look that I couldn't understand. When I was quite sure that he was fully conscious again, I spoke to him, very gently.

"Henry," I said—and it was the first time I'd ever called him by that name—"Henry, where is Mrs. Bream?"

He shook his head, and turned his face away.



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"Henry, won't you confide in me?" I said. "I want to be your friend. Where is Mrs. Bream? Why are you here all alone when you're so sick? Why isn't your wife here, nursing you?" Then a sudden thought came to me. "Henry," I asked, "have you quarreled with your wife? Has she left you?"

Suddenly he began to sob. It's ghastly enough to see any grown man or woman sob, but never was my heart so wrung as in that moment. He was so utterly exhausted physically, so emaciated, and he looked so grotesque with his stubble of beard. Not knowing what to do, I sat on the bed and put an arm about his shoulders. This seemed to give him comfort. He very soon regained control of himself.

"I never had a wife!" said Henry slowly. I stared at him.

"But, Henry!" I cried. "you've told me so much about her, and about your little girl! What on earth do you mean?"

"I invented them both!" said Henry, in a very low voice. Then he began to explain. He had been a poor, illiterate boy, he told me, always an invalid, and always very ungainly and awkward. He had a very miserable boyhood. His chronic sickness was a great expense to his father, and he was made to feel that he was a burden. His brothers and sisters taunted him, and made his life a misery.

As he grew older he found it increasingly difficult to make friends. He had always been painfully shy, and ridicule terrified him. He began to feel that everybody laughed at him as a little runt and despised him. I became an absolute obsession with him.

Then, when he was about twenty, it appears he fell in love. The girl must have been a hateful, heartless little hussy, for she allowed him to make love to her, and to pour out his heart in sentimental letters, and then, when the joke began to pall, she humiliated and mortified him in front of a gathering of acquaintances, by reading out his poor, foolish, heartfelt letters, and mocking them sentence by sentence.

"After that," said Henry, "I couldn't bear the thought of ever letting another woman make a fool of me like that—but I did so want to have a nice little home—and everything!"

"A few years ago an uncle left me all that money, and I bought this place. But I hadn't the nerve to ask any woman to share it with me. Women like men who are strong and can do things. I'm no good to women. But I would so much have liked to have a wife and child—and I didn't want people to know that I was such a fool, and that I hadn't got any nerve—and so I just pretended I had a wife and child. It gave me a certain kind of empty bitter happiness—to talk to you—and other people—about my wife—and my little girl... You see I had plenty of money—far more than I could spend on myself—so I got to buying presents for—for them, as if they really existed. I thought when I died I'd leave this house, and everything in it, to someone who'd appreciate it..."

IT'S a pretty house," said Henry, "and it's got most everything in it. There's a nursery—simply full of toys. I have a radio there, and I sometimes listen to the bed-time stories, but I guess they sound kind of silly unless you can explain them to a child, and all the closets are full of things I've bought. Somehow I haven't always had the heart to open them up after I've bought them. You've no idea how difficult it is to keep up pretences, sometimes," he said seriously.

For some minutes I couldn't trust myself to speak. He had told me all this in such a dreary, low monotone, that its pathos was only heightened

"Henry," I said, finally, "why go on keeping up pretences? Why don't you make it come true?" He looked at me with the ghost of a smile.

"I don't know any girls," he said. "and even if I did, who would marry a weakling like me?"

"Henry!" I scoffed. "you're a liar. You're in love with a girl at this very moment." He probably blushed. It's difficult to tell through a three weeks beard. At that moment I heard Dr. Bennett tooting his horn outside. I ran down the stairs to admit him. Seeing the smashed-in door he thought there was at least a murder. I explained things to him hurriedly, and then left them alone. A plan was forming in my mind.

Bennett reported to me in my office several hours later.

"I don't know why you called me in," he complained. "The man has a doctor already—a very good doctor—and now he's as sore as a wet hen at me because he thinks I'm trying to grab his patient."

"But how was it that he was left all alone?" I asked.

HE HAS a practical nurse—an old hag whom I'd be ashamed to entrust my worst enemy to—and she took it into her head that he'd be all right if she took a couple of hours off; that's all. She strolled in just after you left and I fired her!"

"Has he got anybody now?" I wanted to know.

"She's staying until we get another nurse tonight," said Bennett. "But, you know, good nurses are scarce these days, with half the town sick with influenza after these damned blizzards! However, he'll be all right. Don't you worry." And with that he hurried off.

I was busy for another hour or so, and then I had everything all fixed. About thirty minutes later I drove up to Henry's house again. There were lights in several rooms, and I saw that the door had been fixed. The door was answered by a disagreeable woman, in white overalls, whom I recognized at once from Bennett's description.

I went up into Henry's room, and found him propped up in bed.

"Are you well enough to be shaved?" I asked, after we had exchanged greetings. He looked startled.

"Shaved?" he said, all flustered. "I think so... What for?"

"You're going to have company!" I told him, and I set to work. Fortunately for Henry, he had a safety razor, or else this story wouldn't have a happy ending. Heaven knows I must have hurt the poor fellow. However, he bore it like a stoic, and all the time he asked me what the big idea was. As if he didn't know!

When I finally had him slicked up, and looking pretty good, I went back and fetched Faith. Poor kid! She was shivering with excitement, and was so flushed that she looked prettier than ever.

I was afraid, at first, that there would be a very embarrassing scene, but somehow there wasn't. In the most natural and beautiful way in the world she walked over to the bed, and knelt down by his side. Then I left the room. It wasn't for me to hear what they said to each other.

Presently Faith tip-toed down the stairs and spoke to me. Her eyes were like stars. "Please, Mr. Toomey, will you go down to the car, and get baby?" she said. "He says he wants to see her at once! Bring up baby!"

"Yes, my dear," I answered, "and I'll tell my lawyer to come right over and attend to the little matter of your divorce. What's more, you're fired—all because of selling goods to Henry. Eh?"

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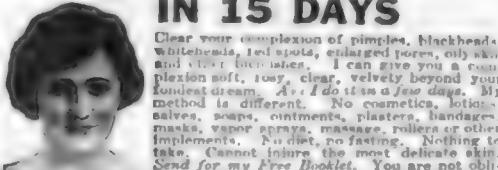
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Maria's Story

[Continued from page 44]

baby. But, for the moment, terror seized my heart. Then I became reasonable and knew that a young couple could not have taken on the responsibility of a child which was not theirs unless they had the genuine love of children in their hearts.

Why not consult Street about my affairs and how to invest my money, and then get the children out of the Home?

Hadn't he asked me to come to him if I needed help? Wasn't he kindness itself at the time of Silvio's death? Hadn't he come to the hospital to see me?

No, he would want money for his advice. Lawyers cost money. I couldn't spend any.

I sat there and thought. Maria was tired now and had fallen asleep on my lap. Little Silvio had found some boys and was playing with them.

A distant church-bell sounded five o'clock. I must take the children back to the Home. When could I take them to a real home?

I got up, called the children. I had decided that in the morning I would go to John Street's office.

At the door of the Home, I kissed my darlings good-by and walked down to Mulberry Street to my neighbor's.

What a welcome I had! All of the old acquaintances in the tenement ran in to see me, and such a sputtering of Italian you never heard.

"What a fine dress you have on, Mrs. Guidi."

"Are you going to get married again, Mrs. Guidi?"

"How are the children, Mrs. Guidi?"

"And how is the new baby?"

HOW was the new baby? I could not tell them. My neighbor shook her head at them and frowned. There was an embarrassing silence.

Then, after supper, my friend and I sat down and talked. How nice it was to be talking Italian once more. Silvio's language and mine. And I could talk about Silvio to this woman!

"Take good care of his violin," I said. "Perhaps one day my little Silvio may play it."

Things were better with her by now. One of the boys had his working papers. That relieved the situation. Why, he had taken his mother to the theatre one night. She told me the story of the play, gesticulating each passage.

We talked of the old country and of my days in the tenement, and then she asked:

"What are you going to do, Mrs. Guidi?"

"I don't know," I answered. "Tomorrow I am going to see Mr. Street."

"The young lawyer!" exclaimed my neighbor. "That just reminds me. He's been here several times inquiring for you. But no one knew where you were. He seemed very anxious to see you."

Now it was easy to go to Street. Perhaps he had some news for me. Maybe there was something about the Union. Well, at any rate, no matter what it was, it wouldn't be so hard now to walk into that office in the morning.

I awoke very early next morning. I put on a nice dress which my mistress had given me and really looked in the cracked mirror at myself while I arranged my hair.

I couldn't believe it. I looked young again. My face was full. My skin was clear, and I didn't stoop—like most of the poor women of my age.

"I'll be back soon," I said to my neighbor as I walked out of the house and started downtown.

I waited in the same hallway where I had sat that day with my heart breaking

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and wondering how I could bury my beloved husband. I sighed and thought of all that had passed, and then the door opened.

"Señora," exclaimed Street, as he approached me and took my hand, "I am glad to see you. How well you look, and how are the children, and how is the baby?"

"I don't know," I murmured.

"What do you mean?" asked Street.

"She was adopted," I replied, lowering my head. "There was nothing else to do."

I swallowed, threw my head up and determined that he should not see me again as a sorrowful woman. It wasn't fair. But why did people always ask me about the baby—only natural kindness, I supposed. For could there be anything more interesting to inquire about than a dear little baby?

"Come into my office, Señora Guidi," said Street, waiting for me to precede him into the little cubby hole which was his office.

He sat down behind his desk. Sure enough there was the red tie, and his hair shone like patent leather—and that mustache! I thought he looked like a barber.

How mean of me to think such a thing. But I was always comparing every man I saw with my Silvio—my handsome Silvio. The women of the tenement had asked me if I would ever marry. What a strange idea.

"I tried to find you, Mrs. Guidi, several times," said Street. "I wanted to remind you that if you needed any advice that I was here to give it to you, and then just lately a proposition has come up which I think might interest you."

"A proposition which might interest me?" I repeated, rather dazed.

"Yes," he answered.

"What is it?" I asked bewildered.

"You are still Mrs. Guidi?" he asked, leveling his eyes on me with a suspicion of suspense in them, which I didn't understand.

"Yes," I said proudly.

He hesitated for a moment, and then proceeded.

"It's rather awkward," he hesitated for a moment.

Then he laughed.

"Oh, I can be frank with you. You look so well and stylish, Mrs. Guidi, that I didn't know whether the chance of a good position would interest you."

"Oh, Mr. Street," I exclaimed.

I COULDN'T go on. I was too excited. Then I collected myself and said:

"That is just what I came to talk to you about. I have some money in the bank which I have been able to save during the last year, when I was nurse to a baby. But that baby doesn't need me any more. I can't spend it. I must not spend it. I want to get to work at once. Oh, Mr. Street, I do so want to get ahead so that I can have my children with me."

"I'm afraid you can't have your children with you in this position which I have in mind for you—at least for the present. We can't tell how it will work out. This is the proposition." He took his pen in his hand and tapped the desk with it. He had nice hands—but of course not like Silvio's. He straightened his red tie with the other and spoke.

"There is an old lady client of mine whose husband has just died. She has plenty of money to keep her home. But someone must look out for her—keep house and take care of her. She is very nice and is Italian. I thought you might consider the position. It would not be hard and you would find her congenial. I am quite sure she would like you. The salary will be good."

He didn't call it wages—he said "salary."

"That would be splendid—if she would like me," I said.

"That's quite simple, Señora. She is bound to like you. I'm sorry I couldn't arrange something for you to have the children with you. But I am sure she would be pleased to have them come to see you there. In fact, I'm quite certain she would enjoy visits from them."

This was too wonderful. Imagine all the good things which were happening to me.

"I am so grateful to you, Mr. Street." I murmured. "I don't know how to thank you. It seems that I am always thanking you for some great kindness."

"All in my profession," said Street.

He took out his watch and looked at it. "Come over across the street with me, Señora, to the restaurant. We'll have lunch and talk over the business."

HOW kind that man was! Imagine taking me to a restaurant for lunch. He must be very busy to have to use his lunch hour for business conversations.

"I'll be back at two," he said as we left the office.

It did seem strange to have a man help me across the street and help me off with my coat when we sat down to the table.

"What would you like?" asked Street, handing me the menu.

I glanced at the card. My eyes fell on "ravioli"—one of our country's dishes. I smiled and as I started to speak he said: "Ravioli?"

Then we both laughed. Imagine! I had laughed the day before, too. Perhaps I was still young. I couldn't believe it. Then I remembered the face I had seen in the mirror in the morning. Perhaps I was.

"Bring a bottle of Chianti, too," commanded Street of the waiter.

The time flew while we ate our Italian lunch, and we laughed and talked—of the old country. How nice to be with one's own countryman!

Then he got down to business. But I thought he wasted much of the time in talking about everything but business. As I look back now, all of the business conversation of that supposed business luncheon was to give me a card with the name of Mrs. Bonchi written on it, with her address in East Tenth Street, and then tell me to go there the following afternoon at five o'clock.

But perhaps that was the way lawyers did things. I didn't know. In fact I didn't think much about it. My brain was in a whirl over this unexpected gift of fortune.

How quickly things happened to me! In my short life I had been confronted with the most amazing situations, and now here I was on the threshold of another phase of life—but so different from the others. This time I was radiant with the prospects of getting on my feet and looking to the time when I could have my children with me. Then it came again—not all of my children.

As we left the restaurant and Mr. Street was stopping to light a cigar at the small counter by the doorway, I looked at the calendar. April fifteenth!

"What is it?" asked Street, with a soft tone of anxiety and sympathy in his voice. For he had seen pain flash darkly over my face and my eyes full.

"A year ago today my baby was born," I choked, and started out the door.

He took my arm going down the stairs and I was glad to feel the pressure of his hand. Unconsciously, I pressed it against my side.

We said nothing but walked up the street. That very moment I knew that there was great understanding in that dapper little lawyer's heart and that his heart was big.

He took me to the corner and put me on the horse-car.

[Turn to page 96]

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Maria's Story

[Continued from page 91]

"Adieu," he called. "I'll be up soon and see how you are getting along. Good luck!"

What a pleasant meeting it had been. How nice to laugh once more.

When I got back to my neighbor's, her joy was pathetic over my good fortune.

"And he invited you to the restaurant and you drank Chianti!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Mrs. Guidi. You should be marrying again. Don't be foolish like I have been, slaving away like a drudge when you could get a good man to pay the rent."

The next day I bade my good friend good by, called a cab and with my trunk on the driver's box and Silvio's violin in my lap started uptown.

MY HANDS caressed the battered case of the violin and I thought of the journey to Genoa, when we were going there to take the ship to America where my Silvio was to make his fortune.

A trim maid ushered me into the tidy little house in Tenth Street. I waited in the front parlor. It was a pretty room and as the maid entered with the long taper and turned on the gas I saw every evidence of refinement and culture.

Would I be satisfactory?

But when I saw a charming old lady with white wavy hair and a soft lace mantilla over her shoulder come into the room and take my hand in both of hers and say in Italian: "Welcome, Maria. I know we are going to get on famously." I felt that I was in a safe harbor after a perilous voyage.

That night before I went to bed I poured out my heart in prayers of thankfulness, went to sleep and awoke the next morning with the sunlight streaming over my bed.

The days passed pleasantly and quickly with dear Mrs. Bonchi—with our mornings of sewing and housekeeping, lunch, then her nap and a walk later on down to Washington Square.

One Sunday after dinner, after the nap, just as we were starting for our walk, a card was brought in. Mrs. Bonchi took it and read with very evident pleasure:

"Mr. John Street."

"Oh, say we will be right down," said Mrs. Bonchi to the waiting maid.

"Well, well, I am glad to see you," exclaimed Mrs. Bonchi as she entered the parlor. "And I want to thank you for finding Maria for me. Already I am at a loss to know how I ever managed without her before."

How lovely of Mrs. Bonchi to say that, I thought.

"How do you do, Mrs. Guidi?" asked Street bending gallantly over my hand and dispelling all sensitiveness of being a hireling.

"I'm very happy," was all I could formulate in words, but he smiled one of those sympathetic smiles of his which made me know that he understood and wanted to say.

"Come for a walk with us and then come back for tea, Mr. Street," said Mrs. Bonchi courteously.

"With pleasure," the lawyer replied.

As we walked down Fifth Avenue I was struck by the kindness and consideration which this young man showed toward his elderly client, and I could see clearly that there was between them a tender affection.

Tea that night was very charming. I was surprised when Street sat down at the piano and played for Mrs. Bonchi, and played well.

"Come in soon again, Mr. Street," called Mrs. Bonchi as I took Street to the door. "We're always glad to see you."



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For Children Also

One evening while we were alone, I told Mrs. Bonchi about the baby. She put her arm around me and said:

"I know, Maria. I once had a baby but he died. I never had another."

From that day we were closer than ever.

Street was a regular caller every Sunday now. We were always a happy group—Mrs. Bonchi, Street, my little Silvio and Maria and myself.

My children adored Street. He loved them. What games he could play with them and how gay he was!

Then one night Mrs. Bonchi said, proudly:

"Here are some tickets for the Italian Ball, Maria; ask Mr. Street to come to dinner and take you."

"Oh, Mrs. Bonchi, I haven't danced since I was a girl and I have no dress to wear."

"Haven't danced since you were a girl. That's all you are now, child. And as for a dress, go out and buy a pretty one and let me give it to you for a present. I'm a selfish old woman to keep you at home all the time when you ought to be out dancing and having a good time."

We went to the ball—John Street and I. And we danced until four o'clock in the morning and I came home giggling like a girl, with my feet blistered so that the minute I shut the door on him I tore off my slippers and sat on the chair in the hall trying to rub some of the swelling down.

What a gorgeous night! I was back in Italy dancing in the village. The music, the lights, the pretty girls and handsome young men.

I wasn't a widow with three children. I was a young girl out with her beau.

For by this time I was really thinking of Street as a beau. How could I help it when that darling Mrs. Bonchi was doing all in her power to make me think so and kept telling me he was a fine young fellow and that I should not be wasting my life taking care of an old lady. And hearing such things would make me blush as red as the roses I used to make.

Then it happened.

John had invited me to the opera. He called for me in a cab and we drove in state to the Thalia Theatre on the Bowery.

When I first took my seat and heard the orchestra tuning up, a sick feeling came over me. I thought of Silvio playing there. At first I felt like running out of the theatre and away from those violins. But then John looked at me and it was all right.

The opera was "Aida." How beautiful it was. I was thrilled with the music. As each act progressed I felt the charm of the music more and more.

WHEN in the last act the lovers were singing their death duet and I knew they were to be separated, my shoulder unconsciously leaned on John's and without being conscious of it our hands reached for each other's.

The curtain fell. We were still holding hands.

As I stepped into the cab I heard John say to the driver:

"Delmonico's."

I knew he could not afford this. I knew that he was having a struggle to get a practice—but nevertheless I was glad we were going.

We said nothing in the cab. But he held my hand firmly in his. The spell of the music was still on us.

When we sat down at the table in Delmonico's after our supper was ordered, John reached across the table and looked into my eyes very quietly and said:

"Maria, I have something to ask you."

I lowered my eyes. I knew what it was.

"Maria, I love you. Will you marry me?"

I could not answer at once, nor could I look at John—too many conflicting thoughts were running through my head. What a temptation!

I was very happy with dear Mrs. Bonchi—but she was old. I would not always have that home. I wanted peace and a feeling of security. And besides, I was in love with John Street.

Yes, I loved him—not like I loved Silvio. That could never happen again. But I loved him and wanted to be his wife—to be his wife and have him love me and take care of me.

I almost lost control and said "Yes," involuntarily. But then the two dear little faces of my children flashed into my mind. I saw them in the Home, running to me on the happy days when I went to see them—how they almost toppled me over as I reached down to clasp them to my breast.

IN this moment came little Silvio's words that day on the horse-car:

"We'll live in a house all together."

I checked the "yes." I had to go on working and saving so that as soon as it was possible I could have my children with me. I could not stand the separation much longer. Being separated from those two dear ones made me more conscious of the gnawing pain in my heart for my baby who had been taken away from me.

How strange it is how many things can race through one's mind in a few seconds. It was not long before I raised my eyes to John's and chokingly said:

"I'm sorry—I'm sorry. I can't."

I swallowed hard to keep back the tears and felt sure that everybody in the restaurant had their eyes on me.

"Why, Maria?" asked John nervously. "Don't you—don't you love me?"

I looked squarely at him and replied

"Yes, Giovanni, I love you."

"Then, why can't you marry me? What's to keep you, Maria mia? You know I love you and have loved you ever since that day when you came to my office. I didn't think of it as love then. But as I look back now, I loved you from the first. That is what made me go to the hospital to see you. I have only been waiting until I thought it would not offend you to have me propose to you. Otherwise I would have asked you the second time you came to my office."

I could hardly speak. I could hardly think. Oh, to live with this splendid man who loved me and whom I loved, and we were always so happy together! We always laughed. And to me to laugh seemed heaven. There had been such a long time when I didn't know how.

"Tell me the reason," pleaded John, reaching for my hand across the table and holding my gaze with his beautiful dark eyes.

"The children," I answered.

"What about the children?" asked John. "You know I love your children as I love you. Because they are you."

"I know that," I said.

"I promise you I would be good to them," pledged John.

"I know that," I answered.

"Well then, my dear Maria, what is there to keep you from marrying me? Why do the children prevent us from being what we should be to each other—man and wife?"

"I couldn't stand being separated from them," I murmured.

"But why should you be separated from them, Maria?" asked John, showing evident bewilderment.

"Because I am planning and longing for the day when we can all live in a house together," I answered, unconsciously using my little Silvio's words.

"But where else would they live but in our home, Maria?"

[To be concluded]

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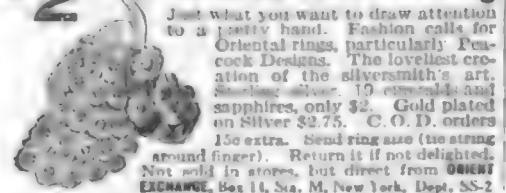
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Doctors' Wives

[Continued from page 3]

For a few feet I hurried, only to slacken my pace as I felt weakness overtake me. I did not know whether I was walking in the right direction. How could I tell where the station lay?

I had not passed a house yet. Several cars rolled by, but when I tried to stop them to inquire, they paid no heed. I was stiff with cold by the time I did reach a habitation, just a small shack set so close to the edge of the road that it looked as if a passing vehicle could snap it off. But there was a light in a window, so I knocked.

"Now who might that be?" said a fretful, woman's voice inside. "A body ought to be home on a night like this, and not out visiting."

"Yes, I ought to be home. If only I were!"

Then I could hear the scraping of chairs and a timid little man came to the door. I asked about the railroad. He pointed in the direction from which I had just come.

"Three miles up that way," he said, "and a bit of a way to the left. It's a pretty good step in a night like this, Miss."

The news was disheartening. "And the trains?"

"Reckon there's one tonight. Along about eleven, or twelve, or maybe a bit after that."

I thanked him. Bang! The door was closed in my face. Inside the man and the woman returned to their fire, their lamp, their comfort.

Over three miles! And his vagueness about the trains maddened me. It made a great difference to me whether the train left at eleven, or at two in the morning.

I started trudging back. My dress was clammy with rain.

I would have to pass that ghastly roadhouse again. Presently from the distance I saw its taunting light. The comfortable reception hall looked attractive from the road. Many rooms were aglow. Then there were others there, too, and inside Ralph Chase was no doubt eating a hearty meal.

I shunned the place as one would a pest-house, keeping as far to the other side of the road as possible. For a little distance the lights streamed out across my path. Then a bend in the road hid them, and only darkness and desolation lay ahead.

I hated Ralph Chase. After learning about the anonymous note, I should have known better than to have anything to do with him.

In his own way, my husband had warned me, too, but resentment against him flared anew. I felt that he should have seen what was going on. He should have watched over me. He was a man of the world. The guilt was not wholly mine. His neglect had brought me to this.

But what was it Ralph had said just before I went out into the night?

"Your husband won't believe your story anyway—"

BUT even as I wondered, something inside me clung to the suspicion that perhaps Ralph was right. Suppose he did not believe that I had been true to him. He was a man, too, like Ralph. Probably all men would jump to the same conclusion. What if the whole world did?

The more I thought of it, the more I persuaded myself that he would not have faith in me. I remembered my father's attitude when he had thought that I was having an affair. Men were the same the world over. My husband would probably put me out, as Father had done.

Ralph Chase would have his satisfaction. He would see the doors of my own home

closed against me. I had blundered, but somehow one always finds a spark of hope. That spark lay in the expectation of getting back to Buffalo before morning.

Then I felt sure I could convince my husband.

I was a born city girl. Horrible shapes came out of the dark to terrorize me. Weird noises followed me. But I kept resolutely on, step by step, yard by yard.

When at last I saw the station ahead, I could no longer control my tears. They scorched my frozen face and stung my eyes. The station meant relief.

To my dismay, the place was dark and locked. Did that mean there would be no more trains that night? I was frantic. This crying spell had made me weaker. I found a rude bench out at the back and dropped into it, foot-sore and fatigued.

I do not remember the name of the place, nor was I interested in finding it out. Neither do I know how long I sat there at the steady, sharp rain.

Hours after, so it seemed and so it was, I beheld a man approaching with a lantern. I began to grow very nervous, but soon I heard keys rattling. The station master!

He unlocked the door. Presently through the open door I saw him touch a match to a few pieces of wood in the rusty stove. So I went in.

Though he shot me a suspicious look, I did not care. I asked if there was a train that night. He grunted something which I understood to mean that there was.

"What time does it leave?" I asked.

"Oh, about midnight," he returned, in very unfriendly fashion.

About midnight? I was provoked. Didn't anybody know just when the trains left? And when did it arrive in Buffalo?

He consulted a schedule on the wall. "Six o'clock in the morning. There's a half hour to wait now, if it ain't late."

"Is it?"

"Well, I don't know."

Was it just that I was impatient, or that everybody was in league against me to give me no definite information? The fare to Buffalo was over five dollars, and luckily I had a ten-dollar bill.

Several men with water dripping from their coats stamped into the station before the train came in. They regarded me curiously, as I crouched over the fire, but no one spoke to me, even when we all got on the train together.

It was a ghastly ride. I shall never forget it. I paid the price of that ride in more ways than one. Every detail of it was a knife wound in my heart, and the memories of it are the scars.

THE train was a milk-train that stopped at every tiny station on the way, almost like a trolley. Only one car was devoted to passenger service. This was badly heated. Everyone wore damp clothing and the odor sickened me.

I had not eaten since breakfast that morning. Several times I felt faint. I was too nervous to relax, as I did not know what I would do when I got to the city.

I knew that I would not go back to my husband. I was afraid of his anger and scorn. I had friends, but it is one thing to have them in time of plenty, and another to go to them in time of shame.

The city was all busy by the time we drew in at the station, half an hour late. Gradually, it had been coming to me that I might go back to my father. I could try, at least. Perhaps some spark of paternal love smoldered in his heart.

Scarcely knowing what I was doing, I found myself moving along the elm-shaded street, turning into our yard, looking through a window from a screen of evergreen beside the house, and then knocking at the familiar door. Through a mist, I saw somebody open the door to me. It was

my father! Was it my father? He seemed different. I became dimly conscious of his face twisting in astonishment. Then blackness swallowed me.

* * * * *

I opened my eyes to the surroundings I knew so well, the maple dresser, the picture of my mother hanging over it in a gilt frame. I lay in my old brass bed. I lay again in the room in which I had woven so many girlish dreams, and cherished so many rebellious thoughts.

Father was bending over me. Again I had that feeling. He was my father, yet not my father. I wondered if he could be my husband. No, it was Father, and looked different, older and worried, and why, his eyes almost seemed tender!

I could not understand this at all. Just a moment before, I was chilled to the heart. Now fires were consuming me. I was burning to death. I threw off the covers. Father turned them down again. I repeated my gesture.

"Keep covered," said Father, softly. "Don't talk. Do you want me to send for your husband?"

But I wanted to talk. I had to talk. "No—no!" I murmured. "If only you had been my friend, Father! If only you had been there! You could have warned me. You could have saved me, and advised me."

I KEPT rambling on and on. He stopped me.

"I was waiting for you to come here with him. Waiting for you to make the first advance."

Although my body was burning, my mind was extraordinary clear. I knew what Father meant.

"I was afraid," I whispered. Words came to me with difficulty. What was this flame that was consuming me?

"And I was too proud. My damnable pride. Your mother knew how to soften it. If she had only lived!"

It is queer that at times like this, for I was on the threshold of delirium, one can see situations more sharply defined than when one is in a normal state. For the first time in my life, I caught a glimpse of my father as he really was.

This was a great concession for my father to have admitted that his pride was damnable. In his own inarticulate fashion he was asking me to forgive him. I had not been a very sympathetic daughter to him, either. Yet, he was asking me to forgive him.

I saw him, in a flash, not as a violent-tempered, mean monster of some sort, but as a disappointed man, one thwarted and made bitter by his wife's early death; a man over stern because he feared that his child might come to some harm without a mother's love.

In that moment, across an abyss of a lifetime, we reached out toward each other, a father and a daughter who had been strangers before. But this time, we did not pass in the dark. Father's hand was cool and soothing on mine.

I seemed to be lying on knives. One was cutting into my right side. No—not knives. Sharp stones. A dozen were cutting into my right side.

Yet I listened to Father, straining every effort to catch his words. I was afraid he would send me from home again.

"You'll keep me here," I managed to gasp, "in spite of what I did?" I forgot that he knew nothing of my life, or my recent error.

"Don't imagine I put you from my thoughts, daughter. I inquired about your husband. I looked into his record. And I was glad that you had married a man among men; a dreamer as well as a doer; a healer of humanity's ills. Everywhere

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I hear his praises. Everywhere I see signs of his miracles. He is a man with a heart."

That is the last I remember for many a day. They told me afterward that I had had pneumonia, due to exposure on that terrible night when I ran away.

Father seemed to be around me all the time, but frequently, as I looked at him, he changed into my husband right before my eyes. Then I would be seized with terror and shrink away.

Later I heard how I kept crying out constantly that there was a burden on my conscience; that I wanted to throw off that burden, only they would not let me confess. And then, the nurse said, I would always beg my husband not to punish me by thrusting knives into my right side.

That was the pneumonia pain, the congestion on the right lung pressing into me with every breath I drew. They had expected the crisis on the fifth night, but it did not come until the eleventh.

I can only imagine what tragic hours of waiting those watchers at my bedside must have known. On the morning of the twelfth day, I opened my eyes, no longer fever dimmed. A white, cool, rather hard-faced amazon was standing at the foot of the bed. When she caught my eyes, however, her professional mask slipped. She smiled at me, and hurried from the room.

SHE looked familiar. Everything was familiar, but I was too weary to think. In a second she came back with Father, and it was Father this time—nobody else. He just stroked my hand once. Then as he turned away, I saw him get out his handkerchief, walking to the door with it pressed to his eyes.

He did not close the door. As he left, my husband came in. Some dim memories stirred within me. Yet, it was so much easier to lie still and watch, that I did not try to capture them.

While he stood there gazing down at me, a smile of such tender radiance passed over his face that something inside me snapped. I felt tears flooding my eyes. I wanted to talk, as I had never wanted to before.

But my husband put his finger on his lips, blew me a kiss, and went out.

* * * * *

If I had doubted his love and faith, his utter devotion to me during that early period of consciousness banished my fears. Still, I wanted to hear him say that he loved me. And I yearned to tell him that I loved him too, not frivolously, vainly, as I had before, but with that deep, abiding emotion to which he was entitled.

I marveled, lying there, that a man of his type should have fallen in love with a selfish little fool like me. Given the chance, though, I would prove myself.

On the fourth day, coming for his morning visit, he drew up a chair and sat down.

"I'm going to talk to you, Hester," he said, "but I forbid you to answer me, or to try to explain. Not today at any rate. Do you promise? If not, I'm going out again."

I nodded eagerly. I did not want him to go so soon unless he had to, for I knew that he had already given more time to his errant wife than he could afford.

"I don't know what it was that brought you to this deplorable condition," he began. "No—not a word. I don't care, either. Except that, if it was a situation I might have prevented, I shall never forgive myself."

He was holding my hand, pressing it gently. I feared that if I tried to disobey him, he would drop it, and leave. He was stern when it came to neglect of his orders.

"Where you were during that stormy night is your concern, not mine, Hester. You need never tell unless you feel that

there is a good reason for me to know. I speak of this only because, in delirium, you cried out constantly that you had a great sin to confess. And you still feel that way—"

I did of course. I tried to convey to him without speaking. Waves of shame swept through me at the thought of his generosity. I could not meet his eyes.

"Then you must not," he assured me, understanding my silent message. "You have only two things to do as you lie here. You must help yourself to recuperate. I thank God we have been able to bring you out of real danger. Now you must exert your will power to regain the perfect health you enjoyed before. Your second obligation is just to remember—that I love you—always."

He bent forward, kissed me hurriedly, and left me. It was the kiss of reconciliation, and the instant he was gone I began to cry. I should not have done so, but he made me feel so insignificant, so unworthy, that I had to bury my face in the covers and give way.

This, however, did not interfere with my determination to tell him. Now, more than ever, the necessity was a grave one. Would he feel the same after he knew that I had been on the threshold of infidelity? Would he ever be able to look at me without recalling that another man held me in his arms?

When I should have been centering my attention on my own convalescence, I let this new doubt torture me. As soon as I was strong enough to sit up I begged him to let me tell him. At first he refused flatly, but after observing that the situation really preyed on my mind, he listened.

I did not spare him any details. I wanted him to see me in my blackest colors. Then nervously, eagerly, with my heart pounding like doom, I waited for his answer.

IT CAME silently at first, with his arms crushed tightly about me.

"Mine was the error," he said. "I could have spared you all this agony of physical and mental suffering. I should have warned you against that man."

"You did. I was blind."

"But I was a fool. I did not believe he would dare annoy my wife."

"Your wife encouraged him."

"I can't believe that," he insisted. "I am to blame, dear child. Can you forgive me? I considered you so much a part of my own personality, that I did not believe I was asking too much when I expected you to sacrifice the pleasures of life for my work. That was a mistake. A man has no right to expect his wife to consecrate her life to his profession."

"But he has, he has!" I cried again and again. "I don't want to be your playmate. I want to be your helpmate."

"You will be, you will be," he soothed, for I was growing hysterical, not yet having attained my full strength. "But always, whatever happens, you are my wife."

Oh, I didn't deserve the joy that came, but I let it fill my soul; I let it penetrate every pore in my body, until it exalted me beyond any happiness I had ever known.

And when I learned to walk again, after two months, we went away for a short vacation. I did not want him to do it. I would have been content to re-enter my home and be near him. I realized now what it meant for him to give up two weeks. However, he would hear of nothing else but that we have our long deferred honeymoon.

I am proud of being a doctor's wife. I have a definite place in his office now, and of that too I am proud. I am his partner, his "buddy" he calls me, however insignificant my services are.

THE END

What Might Have Been

[Continued from page 72]

whisper to my mother, "The next time it will be Joyce." I heard my mother groan as she answered, "God spare us that you must tell Herbert that, but please don't tell her."

Herbert, now single handed, battled with the debts incurred by my sickness until one warm, sunny day he came home triumphantly waving above his head the receipt on our last debt. "From now on, little girl, you won't have to save, like a little heathen."

We saved all right, but not the banking way. Herbert enrolled for a correspondence course, and I became his instructor. Instead of his reading the questions over and over, I asked them, and together we threshed out many problems.

His ambition in life had always been to become an electrical engineer. He made rapid progress in his night studies, and by my assistance the course did not tire as it would have had he worked at it alone and silently.

He rented a portable typewriter to answer the many questions, so I typed what he told me to instead of his picking out the letters. Thus he was able to reserve a lot of energy in his night study, and I was gaining a lot of practice on the keys. One day, while re-typing one of his lessons, an idea struck me, which, if followed, might provide funds toward financing Herbert's goal of becoming an engineer.

THROUGH all these hardships, trials, and bits of happiness, Herbert had been lavishing an unfailing love upon me, and I gave him one no less. That love alone served as an inspiration for the first articles I wrote for a news review. I typed them when my husband was away at work, thinking to surprise him. The first one I sent out came back rather promptly, but the editor was very kind and took the time to tell me its faults, and how to rewrite. I did so, and after waiting two weeks, a delightful check came sailing back to me. Then it was that I told Herbert what I had done and of my future plans. Herbert seemed even happier than I over my good fortune.

He insisted that I use the check for my own use, but I would not hear of it. I banked it for the day he would finish his course.

My health had been gradually improving, and when Herbert was told he was to have a vacation, we were both overjoyed. We planned to spend the time visiting Herbert's brother, in a distant city. That was one of the finest plans we ever made, for when we returned home we knew Herbert had a job awaiting him as soon as his course was finished.

I kept my writing up and every once in a while I landed a good-sized check, besides numerous small ones. Herbert received a raise, which came in very handy.

One day, Herbert wired the firm in the distant city that he had passed the final examinations and was ready to go to work. A wire came flying back to the effect that he should come as soon as he could sever his present connections, and so it was, a little over two months afterward, we found ourselves established in the city with Herbert holding a position which was the envy of many. By our working together on his night course, he had quite a bit of reserve strength which he threw heartily into the work.

I made a few friends, but not too many.

How the Shape of My Nose Delayed Success

By EDITH NELSON

I HAD tried so long to get into the movies. My Dramatic Course had been completed and I was ready to pursue my ambitions. But each director had turned me away because of the shape of my nose. Each told me I had beautiful eyes, mouth and hair and would photograph well—but my nose was a "pug" nose—and they were seeking beauty. Again and again I met the same fate. I began to analyze myself. I had personality and charm. I had friends. I was fairly well educated, and I had spent ten months studying Dramatic Art. In amateur theatricals my work was commended, and I just knew that I could succeed in motion pictures if only given an opportunity. I began to wonder why I could not secure employment as hundreds of other girls were doing.

FINALLY, late one afternoon, after another "disappointment," I stopped to watch a studio photographer who was taking some still pictures of Miss B—, a well-known star. Extreme care was taken in arranging the desired poses. "Look up and over there," said the photographer, pointing to an object at my right "a profile—" "Oh, yes, yes," said Miss B—, instantly following the suggestion by assuming a pose in which she looked more charming than ever. I watched. I wondered. The camera clicked. As Miss B— walked away I carefully studied her features, her lips, her eyes, her nose—. "She has the most beautiful nose I have ever seen," I said half audibly. "Yes but I remember," said Miss B—'s maid, who was standing near me, "when she had a 'pug' nose and she was only an extra girl, but look at her now. How beautiful she is."

IN a flash my hopes soared. I pressed my new-made acquaintance for further comment. Gradually the story was unfolded to me. Miss B— had had her nose reshaped—yes, actually corrected—actually made over, and how wonderful, how beautiful it was now. This change perhaps had been the turning point in her career! It must also be the way of my success! "How did she accomplish it?" I asked feverishly of my friend. I was informed that M. Trilety, a face specialist of Binghamton, New York, had accomplished this for Miss B— in the privacy of her home!

I THANKED my informant and turned back to my home, determined that the means of overcoming the obstacle that had hindered my progress was now open for me. I was bubbling over with hope and joy. I lost no time in writing M. Trilety for information. I received full particulars. The treatment was so simple the cost so reasonable, that I decided to purchase it at once. I did. I could hardly wait to begin treatment. At last it arrived. To make my story short—in five weeks my nose was corrected and I easily secured a regular position with a producing company. I am now climbing fast—and I am happy.

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Neither did Herbert. We pledged each other that when the time came for us to leave the city, we would not permit a gay social whirl to permeate our glorious relationship. We stuck to it, entertaining as little as possible and leaving an impression on our friends that we were both very busy people—he with his work at the electric company offices, and I in my study. I asked no greater privilege than to spend one of those evenings so dear to our hearts—Herbert and I together—sitting before our cozy hearth fire, talking over our pet hobbies and reading in our Memory Book, which we have carefully kept since the beginning. In that book is a history of our joy which we gleaned from the dividing of the few dollars which Herbert first earned when he came home from France. There are pressed roses from Baby Sheila's little mound in Greenwood, and there are the seat checks from the first show we felt we could afford after I began writing.

SOMETIMES we forget our Memory Book, and talk of "what might have been." Had I married the other fellow, had we waited until Herbert had achieved his ambition in the electrical game, or had he been single, would he have struggled through those long nights of close study? Those are all questions in my mind, but Herbert, at the end of twenty years, places a firm hand over my lips when I say he might have accomplished even more had he been single, or had married a girl of wealth.

How my heart throbs with happiness when I happen to overhear Herbert telling someone of his fellowmen at the office, "I owe it all to Joyce! I came home without a nickel, and together we tugged at it with all our might and main, Joyce

urging me on and on to a better job, and when she needed a bottle of medicine so badly, she lied to me saying she was getting better so rapidly that she didn't need it, so I would take that dollar to pay my payment on the night course I was taking. Brave little girl, even working up to the time little Sheila came to us! The best now will be none too good for her!"

He gives me the credit, but it wasn't really I, for had he not had that perseverance in him, he would still be on the lower rung of the ladder of achievement. He is nearly to the top, and I will do all in my power to help him reach that rung and stay there. Success did not blind him and make him spend money lavishly. A comfortable home is ours, but not a lavish one. There are greater things in life than material luxuries. Love—love—is the sole purpose of our union, and I pray Heaven that it shall always be so.

Just yesterday I whispered a bit of news to Herbert and for a moment he looked grave, thinking of what my mother once told him. However, our family physician assured him that by perfect living and out-of-door air, I was in the fit and prime of condition and we need not feel alarmed for a moment.

What could make us happier? Have we been too happy? My answer is No! Life is short at the most, and it is cheaper to be happy the short time. I told an aspiring author this very morning.

"Editors want conflict and struggle in their fiction. Life and love is struggle and conflict—whatever you make it. Write of life and love and the real kind born of happy souls."

She looked at me in wonder, and then I remembered. She was unmarried, and knew not the joy of a companionship such as ours.

Shall I "Pet"?

[Continued from page 33]

anyone could have been talking about our—"

"Don't get excited, Dot," I begged, almost unnerved at the unexpected result of my innocent question. "I haven't heard anything. Nobody's been saying anything. It's just a little problem of my own."

"It's nothing of the kind. You're lying to me, Betty. Tell me who's been talking. Tell me, I say, what you heard—"

The grasp on my arms hurt. The astonishment which she saw in my eyes pacified her.

"Don't mind me, Betty. I'm nervous lately," she finished, with a tremulous little sigh. "Your question was so funny, though, that it quite upset me. Why in the world did you ask me such a foolish thing?"

"It may seem foolish to you," I explained, "but it's a mighty serious matter to me. I'm just about sick and tired of having some little flapper vamp my fellows away from me just as soon as we're beginning to get well acquainted. Here I am, twenty-two years old. Every day that goes by brings me nearer to being an old maid. I don't want to be one. I just won't be an old maid, that's all."

She smiled sympathetically at my outburst.

"I don't blame you for that," she agreed, "but I don't think there's much danger of that. How about that fellow you brought over here the other night? He seemed to be a nice chap, and anyone could see that he thinks a lot of you. You ought to be able to hold on to him."

"I'll tell you the truth, Dot," I admitted frankly; "I'm just about crazy over Bob Harris. He's a wonderful fellow, too. But he's young and likes a good time, and I

know I can't keep him when there are so many other girls who are willing to sacrifice everything to give him a much better time than I can. You know how Grandma brought me up, Dot: to believe that a nice girl should be very strict with a fellow. Sometimes I think she doesn't believe in it, herself. I've always followed it, though, and it hasn't brought me anywhere. Now, what am I going to do? Lose my self-respect, or lose love and Bob Harris? And if I do try to please Bob, how can I be sure that he won't tire of me and throw me aside? I'm at my wit's end."

BUT why the deuce did you ask me about Jim and myself?" my sister asked. "What has that got to do with your case?"

"I just want to know what other people have done in a case like mine," I explained. "It will give me courage and help me to decide what is best. But I can't bear the thought of losing Bob. Honestly, he's my last hope. Answer my question, will you?"

"Do you think I'm crazy—I mean, don't be silly," she returned with a blush. "You always were a queer sort, Betty, and now you seem worse than ever. I'm not going to go into any family history, but I can tell you one sure thing. No woman ever got a husband by tacking a "hands-off" sign on herself. You have to attract a man and keep him attracted. All the while you have to contend with competition. The more desirable the man the stronger the competition. It's purely a personal question with every girl—this matter of conceding favors to her men friends. Some girls can go a long ways and gain by it, while others get into all sorts of trouble even when they're very particular."

"The trouble with you is that you've had so many of these old saws about self respect and all that sort of thing drilled into you. Acting along such lines is supposed to produce a fairy prince, automatically. It could, perhaps, if people weren't human. There's the flaw. You can become a beautiful self-respecting old maid very easily that way, though. I can't take the responsibility of advising you. A whole lot depends on the man. It seems to me that if I loved a man and wanted to keep him I'd give heaven and earth to do it. But for Heaven's sake, don't go and disgrace yourself and then say I told you to do this or that. Remember that I haven't told you anything."

Such was the valuable assistance which my married sister gave me. Dorothy had always had the reputation of being a 'devil' herself, and I had thought that she would help me. Of course I was disappointed. I arrived home in time to catch Irma, my lively "kid" sister, in the act of pulling on a pair of my best silk stockings.

"Aren't those my stockings?" I asked, in as terrible a voice as I could muster.

"They certainly are," was her brazen admission, "but I knew you wouldn't mind my borrowing them. It seems so good to have you and Grandma here with the rest of us now, Betty dear."

OF COURSE it does when you can wear my clothes," I said. "Say, isn't that my best pink silk combination you have on?"

"Why, yes, I guess it is, now that you mention it," my saucy-eyed little sister confessed, "but you're so good-natured I knew you wouldn't mind. I've got a heavy date on tonight with an 'oh, baby sugar-papa,' and I want to do the sheba stuff right. Get me?"

"Yes, I get you all right," I said, sinking wearily into a chair and shivering with apprehension as she pulled my expensive stockings roughly over her plump legs.

"Irma," I began after a short silence, "how in the world do you manage to keep all these boys so crazy over you? You have two or three around every night to take you out, and they seem to think that the rest of us here have nothing to do but answer the 'phone and call you. How do you do it?"

Irma favored me with an enigmatic glance.

"Wouldn't you just like to know," was her arch reply. "What's the idea? Jealous?"

"No. Only curious."

"You want to know my secrets of love, huh?" reflected this astonishing little sister of mine, patting her short hair approvingly and pirouetting about the room in airy fashion. "You want to know how I keep my men. Well, I'll tell you. It's a very simple thing if you follow my plan. I give them what they want—what they think they want, anyhow. Any girl who does that can get any man she wants and hold on to him, too."

For the moment I was gravely concerned about my little sister's welfare. I was on the point of moralizing, but remembered in time that my circumspect attitude toward the other sex had proved itself a failure time and time again. I might allow the old-fashioned precepts in which I had trusted to enter my own life again, but I would never again hold them up to others as productive of results.

"You never had much luck with your fellows, did you, Betty?" Irma inquired suddenly, measuring me with speculative eyes that were, to say the least, extremely disconcerting.

"No, I haven't," I admitted candidly, feeling quite the younger sister myself. "What's the matter with me, Irma? Tell me frankly. I won't be offended. It'll help. Just why can't I keep fellows?"

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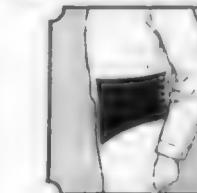
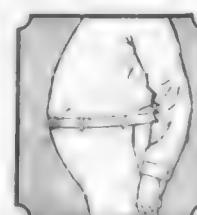
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63 PARK ROW, Dept. 1955, NEW YORK

"Because you don't give them what they want," this remarkable girl informed me point blank. "Betty I'm not kidding. If I had your face and your shape, I'd have hooked a prince long ago. I know just what your trouble is. You're too darned nice. No man is going to go crazy over a beautiful clothes-tree nowadays, no matter how beautiful she is. There are too many real flesh-and-blood girls floating around. Be halfway human. That's my advice. Don't get insulted just because a fellow pulls a little cave-man stuff over in a while. It's just his way of showing that he likes you. Just be yours!"

My sprightly young sister's brisk way of putting things made me feel more cheerful. A little talk with Irma would help anyone I think. She is so full of life and spirits! If only I had her pep and her nerve!

BOB was coming that night. I hadn't been out of town on business. Two weeks was a long time, especially in view of the fact that Bob ordinarily called to see me about four evenings a week. I wondered if he would be as anxious to see me as I was to see him. I wondered, but there was no use trying to cross bridges before I came to them.

I put on a black satin dress which Irma said fitted me as if it had been 'born' on me. From the last curl in my bobbed hair down to the tiny tips of my satin slippers, I strove to make myself attractive for Bob's benefit. Someone else was trying hard to take him away from me. My feminine intuitions told me so. I wondered if I were brave enough to dare all to keep the man I loved so dearly. Was he worth it? Was it bravery I needed?

Bob looked handsomer than I had ever seen him. He seemed glad to see me, but not quite as delighted as I had hoped. Time passed swiftly. I played the piano. We danced. Finally, we sat on the big divan port. Behind us a single electric bulb winked through the heavy pink shade of the floor-lamp. The shadows were soft and warm in the subdued light. The music and the dancing had exhilarated me beyond measure. Bob's arm slipped down to my waist and his lips met mine. Dearly as I loved him, I pushed him away. I had not yet decided.

"What's the matter, Betty?" he asked resentfully, drawing off to himself.

"Please, please, Bob, don't kiss me like that!" I begged him gently. "And don't paw me. I don't like it."

"Oh, you make me sick," he grumbled in disgust. "You pretend to care for me, and yet when you have the chance to show a little affection you push me away. I guess I've been wasting too much time around here, anyway. You don't want me, that's all."

"Oh, Bob, I do want you," I protested earnestly. "You know I do. And I do care for you. But won't you understand? I've tried so often to make you see it. I'm not the 'petting' kind. I can't 'pet' and keep my self-respect. Only one man is going to get familiar with me beyond a certain point, and that will be—my husband."

I had thought that I could fling my ideals lightly aside. But they had become too intimate a part of my nature to submit to any such treatment. I had rehearsed this moment time and time again, picturing myself as a mule-dap when Bob's love was at stake. Yet, I shrank from the issue now. Bob laughed scornfully.

"So a fellow has to marry you, eh, in order to get a meal, hug and kiss? Well, let me tell you for one that I wouldn't care to have such a stingy wife. I'll tell you straight, Betty. I've gone with a lot of girls, but you're the first one that has ever

pulled this gag on me. I can leave here this minute and inside of half an hour round up at least half a dozen girls who'd do anything for me. Some of them don't pretend to love me, either. You do. You expect me to give you all my time and attention. You didn't like to have me go with any other girls while I'm going with you. I cut them out. I did everything you asked. I've spent money on you, freely; I've taken you everywhere you wanted to go. I think I've done my part. What am I getting for it? You yell 'Murder!' if I look at you cross-eyed. I guess you're just playing me for a sucker. I wonder if you were like this with all the fellows you've had."

"What do you want, Bob?" I asked calmly, "for the good time you've given me? How can I pay you back for the money you've spent on me? Just what do you want me to do?"

The hard lines left his face. He was plainly hurt.

"Oh, Betty," he pleaded, "don't put it in that crude way. What do I want, dear, for the good times I've given you, for the little bit I've spent on you? What could I want more than the recollection of those happy nights? I always put my foot in things and I haven't failed now. What I was trying to say was that I am fonder of you than of any girl I've ever known. I do think you could give me a little affection. But no, you seem afraid of me. You won't trust me. What do you think I am, little girl? A villain, or something like that? Look here, Betty, you don't see a black mustache, or anything like that on my upper lip, do you?"

I laughed and felt better.

Bob is a few students. He can talk extremely well. Love is his forte. He talked rapidly with kindling eyes and expressive gestures. I could not meet his arguments, and yet he was unable to convince me. Still it was interesting this exchange of viewpoints—and it did help me.

"Well, who wins? Who is right?" he asked finally in a triumphant tone.

"I suppose you are," I admitted, "but oh, I just can't be like these other girls. It isn't as if I am the only girl in the world who abhors petting. I know that my girl friends at the office feel just the same way as I do about it. I couldn't lower myself to 'pet,' Bob. Why, how could I ever look my girl friends at the office in the face again? I would feel so ashamed and I couldn't hide it. I couldn't look them in the eyes."

BOB was highly amused. So much so that he had difficulty in keeping his seat.

"So that's your trouble, eh?" he chuckled gleefully. " Mention one or two of those girls at the office, will you? I happen to have a few acquaintances there, as you know."

"Well," I said, blushing, "there's Marian Smith, for instance. I don't know her very intimately but I'm sure she thinks just the way I do about these things. She's often told me—"

"This is rich," Bob exclaimed cheerfully. "There's Marian Smith, the toast of the artist colony and one of the fastest steppers in town. You look as if you don't believe me. Oh, I know she's a regular wax model in the day time—that's Marian's line. The fellow who can keep up with her pace is going some. She's too much for me. She used to say that when she was entertaining young men in her parlor she always kept an extra light burning for emergencies. One might go out, you know, and poor Marian might stub her little toe in the dark. Some kidder! Let me tell you, when she starts cutting up, her antics would worry a blue-law advocate to death."

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"I know quite a few of the girls in you office," he went on, "and believe me, I couldn't trust myself alone with some of them for a minute. Talk about wild women! They overdo it. Say, Betty, it's too bad, but those girls are just kidding the life out of you. They're having their fun and helping to cheat you out of yours. Why don't you fool them?"

HIS arm stole around me and crushed me close to him. " Fool them," he repeated softly and swung me masterfully on to his lap. For the moment I let myself go, as his lips touched mine. An urge of wild abandon exhilarated me beyond all restraint. I would show these girls!

"Let's forget everything, dear, everything, little one, but ourselves," Bob's voice came to me as from a great distance. Abruptly, I sprang up. He reached for me, but I eluded him and fled into the hall. He came after me, his arms outstretched. What I saw in his eyes made me afraid.

"No, no," I whispered hoarsely. "Don't touch me."

"God, but I love you, little girl," he breathed passionately.

Again I freed myself, only with a desperate effort.

"Stop, or I'll scream," I told him.

His arms fell and a scowling expression flashed across his face.

"Let me have my coat and hat," he said decisively. "I want to get out of here."

The man I loved was about to leave forever and in anger. It was an agonizing moment. My heart felt icy cold. A paralyzing numbness rooted me to the spot where I stood. My lip trembled and the tears started to my eyes.

"Oh, Bob, don't please don't go," I pleaded.

"This is too much for me," he stormed excitedly. "I've had about all I can stand for one evening. I can't dope you out at all. You pretend to care for me and yet—let let that go for now. I'll be frank with you. I was kept out of town only for one day. I've been spending my evenings with someone who appreciates me, and I'm going over to see her now. You can't blame me, Betty. I think a lot more of you than I do of any other girl, but it appears that you aren't quite as fond of me as some others I know. You really can't expect me to waste my evenings coming over here and talking over the weather every night. You could be wonderful if you weren't—well such a darn out-and-out old maid. I've tried to change things, but you won't have it. Well, I'll come over once more anyhow—say, next Wednesday. It's up to you whether that's to be the last time or not. Think things over—and see what you can do. Goodnight."

My lips moved, but no sound came from them. The door closed gently and he was gone. He would come again—perhaps it would be for the last time. Was I a martyr, or a fool? That's what I am trying to determine now.

Here is the biggest problem of the day, if we are to judge by the scores of stories which come to us on this subject.

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What should she do? Is she right? Or wrong? Or partly right and partly wrong?

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THE EDITOR.



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The Son of My Father

[Continued from page 67]

leaves before a breeze; "willy nilly, blowing," drawn by the magnet of environment back to the marshes from which they sprang.

Though Edna had not been born in New York City, the environment in which she had lived qualified her in answering to the same call which summoned me—and we were going.

I had assumed full charge of the expedition; had convinced Edna that New York and I were first cousins.

The only thing which I really did know was that somewhere on Fourteenth Street was a dilapidated shack where I had once lived with my father and the woman. That was all—with the exception of a small hope that in going back I might sometime see the "Lady of the Spools" again. Though we were being unconsciously led, my confidence was absolute; I seemed to know exactly where I was going. I belonged there!

Now I know what prompted that: the writhing tentacles of the beast at whose breast I had been suckled was calling *ITS* children, and they could do nothing but obey.

NO BEWHISKERED sons of the Jersey soil ever had more difficulty in getting their bearings than did the two muchly bewildered pilgrims who landed from the ferry that day.

We finally made our way to Fourteenth Street; then my castles tumbled to earth.

The shack was gone—the whole place looked different to me. Still we were not worried; anything was better than the place we had deserted.

Edna and I walked on down the street to Huber's Museum. At that time there was a notorious pool-hall in that vicinity which was presided over by a snakey individual called Dick Snelling.

Dick had been one of those who had been in the habit of attending the mysterious seances at my father's home in the old days.

Leaving Edna on the corner I went into this place; surely if I could find Dick everything would be all right.

At first he would not talk to me at all; but when I told him who I was, his change of demeanor was startling, and he welcomed me like the proverbial "lost son."

In those days such people were very cautious of whom they took into their confidence. A person had to have gilt-edge indorsement to get through their private doors.

Dick introduced me to several young fellows in the place, and they all tried to outdo each other in making me welcome.

I had forgotten all about Edna until Dick asked me where I had been since they took me to the Society; then I told him that I was not alone. We walked over to the corner together.

Edna was a very pretty girl—just seventeen—and the same cordial welcome which had been extended to me was given to her.

Dick took her upstairs, saying, "She can stay with my wife until we can find something for her to do." If I had only known men then as I know them now! When I did learn that such men existed, I carried murder in my heart for many months—but the wily Dick had then moved to Chicago.

The murder of a bookmaker, in which a prominent actress was involved, and following whose trial an equally prominent lawyer was disbarred from practice, caused an upheaval in Dick's gang, and they scattered far and wide.

The Slender Woman Wins!

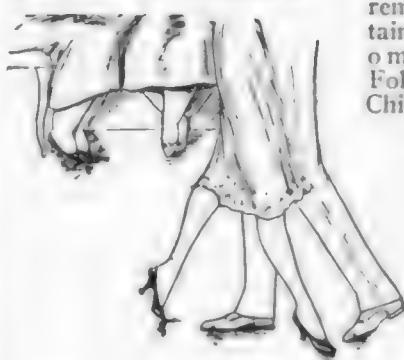
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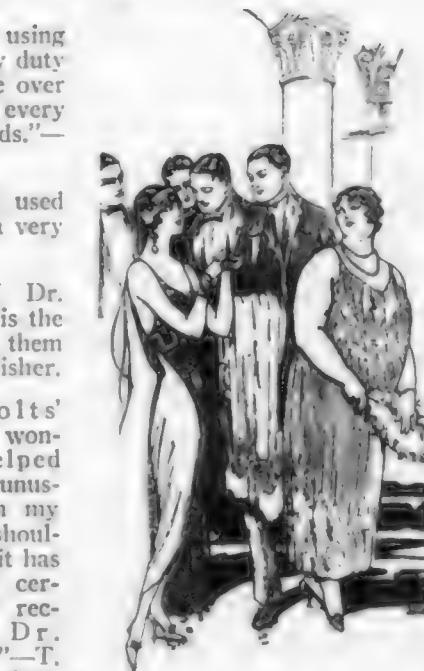
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In the quiet that, of necessity, prevailed at the period I describe, I lost sight of Edna.

Dick's place, where I had become a regular fixture, was the rendezvous for one of the most notorious East Side gangs.

Watched over by Dick, I was accepted as a full-fledged member—with full rights to prey upon decent citizens; also entitled to the underground protection which could be brought to bear through any one of many crooked ward-lords and their "higher-ups."

From the very day of my initiation into the gang, things began to happen in my retarded development as a thief.

I was sent out with a "gun mob," working as a "staff".

We were under the direct leadership of a well-known "dip" who carried on a clever system of removing a person's pockets.

In this little organization, of which I was a more or less important factor, we took all orders by a series of signals from the "tool" who did the actual business of extracting the purse from the victim's pocket.

This gentleman sailed around under the name of "The Kokomo Kike," a name well known in police circles.

In the afternoon we would all meet at Dick's. After a consultation the particular place to be "made" that night would be decided upon.

We would arrive at the designated place separately, then come together as we mixed with the crowd.

At a signal from the "tool" the "stalls" would jam the "prospect" from either side; when the victim's equilibrium had been restored—and his indignation cooled enough to allow him to take an inventory—he always found his purse missing. This had been "lifted" during the "jam" and passed on to one of the "stalls".

Sometimes we would break right into a crowd and get two or three purses in a single raid. Then we would split and divide the spoils at Dick's a little later on—of course a part of them going to Dick to be sent in to the right place in case of need for influence at headquarters.

I was doing handsomely at this and always had money. And of course I knew that I could go right on in this way. Didn't I have protection? Couldn't Dick "put me on the street" again in case I did run afoul of the law? Of course, I had to be careful—but Dick had often told me that if I knew one half as much as my father had known I would never get into trouble.

I WONDER that it never occurred to me that there was something rather funny about that, for my father had been up the river the greater part of the time, and to my personal knowledge he had not been the superintendent of that well-known institution.

One night Dick sent us down to make the "blow-off" from the old Winter Garden.

Like knights of old we sallied forth; saw a good show and were working in a flying wedge that would have done credit to a crack football team when we came out through the crowded lobby.

"Kokomo" had already made two touches but was not satisfied.

Just as we came out of the front entrance he gave us the tip for the "jam." We acted, "Kokomo" got the "pigskin," which he passed to me as he hurried from the theatre.

How easy! As he disappeared I felt a firm hand drop on my shoulder and a low voice advised me that I was wanted for an immediate "interview" at the world famous detective headquarters on Mulberry Street.

The result of the "interview" was that I was sent over to the Tombs, and a charge

of picking pockets was entered on the blotter against me.

At this particular time the murder already referred to was holding the front pages of the New York papers; the "under world" was getting so much unwished-for attention: police heads of different degrees were falling into the basket with such alarming rapidity that Dick's protection changed became changed, and I went to the Island for a year.

Dick came down to see me the day before I left for the Island.

When I asked him about Edna he told me that he had sent her on to Chicago with his wife; that he was going to close up himself, and go to the West for a while, "until things quieted down."

Things were not so easy for me at the Island. Those in charge were not partial to the son of my father. It was a long, long year, especially the last six months. It was then I had heard from another fellow what had really happened to Edna. That is the time during which I carried black hate in my heart, and had an almost overpowering lust to kill Dick Snelling. Poor little Edna!

I FINISHED the year somehow. After trying to locate Dick, all that I could learn was that he was out around Chicago I joined another "gun mob" and moved downtown.

This time our meeting place was a well-known gambling house called "The Birdcage Bar."

For six months I flourished, then slipped again this time for lifting a pocket-book from a passenger on his way to Jersey. I had time enough to drop the purse over the side of the boat. Again I was hauled into Mulberry Street for an "interview."

This time my "protection" could work—they did not find the purse; hence they had no evidence. I was discharged and told to leave the city.

I did so, leaving New York with a bunch of card-sharks who were working the trans-Atlantic steamers. I made two trips with them: the first proved a huge success, the second time over we were called on at the dock by Scotland Yard operatives and convinced that the best policy for us was to stay right on the ship and return to the land which had so far survived the stain of our birth.

Back in New York I evaded the old haunts for a while, joining forces with a bunch of "wiretappers" who operated away uptown in an office building.

This was a new line for me and I did exceptionally well. When the place was raided and closed a few weeks after my debut into this new and profitable game of "trying to get something for nothing," I pulled out with several thousand dollars tucked away for future reference.

I felt out the chances of safety for myself in returning downtown and, learning that everything was clear for me, decided to go into business for myself. The opportunity came, and I purchased "The Birdcage Bar."

I was firmly established in my own particular den of iniquity, when the strangest thing which ever came into the life of a thief and gambler came into mine.

This occurrence has always been a mystery to me—one which I have ceased trying to solve. All I know is that it caused me to go through still more filth.

One night I was sitting in one of the little private rooms which I reserved for certain parties to play in. I was idly shuffling a pack of cards with which I had been playing solitaire.

The door was open and I could hear some of my roulette dealers in conversation as they raked in the checks for the evening's play.

From the conversation I gathered this,

Dick Snelling had left Edna penniless and ill in a Chicago hospital. A fellow who had known her in New York, while I was doing that year on the Island, had picked her up and brought her back.

I have been a thief and a gambler, and they will do most anything; but there are some things that some thieves and gamblers will not do. I thought a whole lot of this little pal of mine.

I sat still long enough to learn that this fellow had followed up the game where Dick had left off; also the name of the house where she was serving out her slavery.

I went out to a drawer in my desk, slipped a gun into my pocket, and went after Edna and the piker who put her there.

The place was one of the most notorious in New York owned and managed by the most cruel-hearted woman who ever existed. I found both the woman and her cadet together. I held them both until she sent for Edna, then backed out of the house with my gun in their faces.

It was quite in keeping with the principle of the place that after I had gained the street with the girl, someone standing in an open window, concealed by lace curtains, should fire the shot which struck me fair in the left shoulder. It was a soft-nosed bullet, and tore things up pretty badly.

I tried to get back and into my place with the girl, but could not make it. I lost consciousness just as the police ambulance picked me up.

I REMEMBER vaguely of coming back to realities while the surgeons were cutting away my shirt; then they must have given me something, for the next I remember was of waking up in the white bed in Bellevue Hospital.

Many wonderful things have happened in Bellevue Hospital; world renowned surgeons, working under dazzling lights, have plied knife and needle, and have succeeded in bringing back those whom it seemed impossible to save. All this has happened many times in this great hospital; but I wonder if they know that they have accomplished even greater things than these? I wonder if they know that they took a born thief and gambler—wounded by another of The Submerged Tenth, and blind of the light of goodness and self-respect—and gave him a vision.

One afternoon during the visiting hours at the hospital, I was aroused by the flurry of skirts and the sound of subdued voices.

In absolute content with the world in general, I opened my eyes—and looked into those of "The Lady of the Spools."

We soon renewed our friendship, and until I had become convalescent enough to leave the hospital she spent an hour or two every afternoon with me.

God bless her! She had been a settlement-worker for many years, and gladly gave me the greatest prescription which can be given to any mortal.

Somewhat, whenever I think of that one for whom I have searched so long—my mother—I think simultaneously of "The Lady of the Spools."

The day came when I bade her good-by at the old Grand Central Station. I was going West—not to kill Dick Snelling, but with the backing of sterling men to go into legitimate business.

I have succeeded far beyond my dreams.

* * * * *

What became of Edna? Why, she was here with me today for a while. No, not my wife; just the dearest pal a man could have. She is following in the footsteps of "The Lady of the Spools," and, somehow I believe that these two women, who have meant so much to me, will soon meet.

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we'll talk this little thing over, kid, eh?"

I was too frightened to do anything but follow him silently up the little stairs, along the deck and down into another cabin that seemed to be half dining-room and half sleeping-quarters. Two bottles stood on the table, and across it was strung a greasy pack of cards as though flung there in haste.

He waved me to a seat on one of the bunks and sat down opposite me, without removing his greasy cap from his tangled hair. "Now listen, kid, I've got this straight. The dicks got Johnnie, see, so he's out of the runnin' for a year at least. Dis is the secont time dey landed the damn dumb-bell."

"I always plays straight with a Jane. See? And if you treats me right you get anything you wants. I got more jack than Johnnie ever saw," and to prove it, he dug under a mattress and pulled out a roll of bills so large that I couldn't have reached around it with both my hands.

"But Johnnie meant nothing to me," I tried to explain.

"Yes? Neither did your mother," he sneered. Cold fright began to steal over me again. Hurriedly, with my words jumbling together, I tried to tell him what I was, tried to make him see that I wasn't what he thought. But he sat and sneered and laughed, and when I asked him with my heart in my mouth when he would take me ashore he said, "Dere's no body goin' ashore from this tub but me. See? And the sooner you talks turkey the better off you'll be. There's your bunk and there's mine, and before I gets t'rew wit you, you'll be doin' like I say." And he went up the little steps to the deck.

AFTER I had cried myself into a state of hysterics, I became so weak that I had to lie back on the bunk and after a while I fell into a restless sleep. When the throb of the motors stopped, I awoke. In a few more minutes I heard him coming down the stairs again. I pretended to be asleep as he leaned over me, his warm breath saturated with liquor. He put a hand on my arm and shook me. Scarcely breathing, I continued to feign sleep; then, with a muttered string of curses, he went over to the other bunk and threw off his shoes, pulled the filthy covers up over himself, and was soon snoring.

Along toward dawn I fell asleep, and when I awoke he was up, I could hear men shouting on the deck above me.

I stole silently up the stairs and looked about me. On every side, as far as I could see, there were boats anchored from two to six miles apart, and clustered about each one of the big ocean tramps was a number of smaller speed-boats, like the one I was on. Instinctively, I knew that we were anchored in the midst of the liquor fleet!

The horrors I went through during that day were beyond anything I had believed possible. He threatened, pleaded, and then tried to force his wide sensuous lips to mine. When they touched me, I turned my face up and bit into his lips until I could almost feel my teeth come together. And he drew back and struck me across the head with his open hand and knocked me unconscious across the cabin.

When I came to, I found myself on my bunk. The cabin was empty. A little later he came down and, leaning his face down close to mine, said, "If you ever do dat to me again I'll t'row you to th' sharks widout a quiver. You might jus' as well get it t'rew your head, kid. You're here to stay, and the sooner you begin to like it the easier it'll be for you."

I began to cry. I said, "I'll tell the men on the other boats. You can't do this, you beast!"

"Can't do it, eh?" he sneered. "An' who

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the hell is gonna stop me? I'm king out here. Do you hear? King! See? An' I'm a square shooter, too. See? Whatta you think'd happen to yuh if you told 'em? They'd come and get you, eh? Like hell! None of 'em steps on dis raft, and they know it. An' if you step on theirs you'd be in twic't as bad. How d'yuh think they all got their women, eh? Sent 'em invitations? Dev all got her the same way I got you, and dev ain't doin' any makin' either. Lady, dis ain't no tea party out here. It

A sound of shots came to my ears. With a bound he was up the stairs and out on the deck. I followed. Following his gaze, I saw a spectacle that I thought had died with the old buccaneers and pirates a hundred years ago.

On a tramp steamer, not a hundred yards away, there were at least twenty men engaged in a fight that lasted but a few minutes and ended the same way it started

with guns. I saw men slink down the decks away from the little group who seemed to command, and then they carried three inert bodies along the deck and into a cabin.

With a grin he turned to me and said, "See, kid, that's the kind of stuff you're in. Some of dem boats is anchored here for two months gettin' rid of der hootch, and when a skirt is tooked on board, she ain't got the chance of a snowball in hell!"

Sick, I went back to the little cabin and threw myself on the bunk. It didn't seem possible. I actually pinched myself, believing that I had fallen asleep and was dreaming.

That night he ran in through the thick fog again and left the rest of the load we had on board. We stayed in after we had disposed of all our liquor.

Leaving a man to watch me, he went ashore next morning and I tried every way that I knew to get him to let me go.

"Me life wouldn't be worth a nickel, lady, so you might just as well lay off me now. I ain't gonna let you go and that's that," he said. "The best thing you can do is to be the 'old man's' friend and after a while he'll let you go."

"In a couple days we're gonna go down the coast to run in a few 'pieces of silk' from Cuba, and if you kid him along he'll let you go before we leave."

Puzzled, I asked him what he meant by "pieces of silk."

"Chinks," he answered, smiling at my incredulous look. "Sure, the old man gets six hundred berries a piece to bring them in."

"I don't understand what you mean," I said.

"Listen, lady. You know they don't allow no Chinks to come into the United States, anymore. And the Chinks that's already there needs men to work for 'em. So they pays an agent twelve hundred berries apiece to smuggle 'em from Cuba into Florida. We gets half of that for runnin' 'em."

"An' if we gets caught we gets a five thousand dollar fine and five years in the hoosegow for each Chink, so we play our

cards pretty close to our bellies. It's risky stuff, and if you're runnin' along with us then and we gets caught, you can bet your last shirt you'll spend the early part of your life in a ladies' jail!"

"This gang out here is made up of dopes and gunmen, and they don't stop at nothin'. They ain't a day goes by but what a couple guys gets bumped off. Believe me, they ain't never been anything in no story books that could touch it!" And then he lapsed into a studied silence, and I couldn't get another word out of him.

After a while the "old man" came back, and under his arm he had a great bundle which he dropped in my lap and said, "Der's" some glad-rags fer you, kid. Don't say I never done nothin' fer you!" and he laughed at my rage until he was red in the face.

A week later, after we had cruised down the coast, we put into a port in Cuba at night, and within fifteen minutes eighteen slinking, stealthy Chinamen, still dressed in their native costumes, crept aboard. Then we shot out at full speed through the Caribbean Sea, across the Gulf Stream, through the coral reefs and inlets of the Florida coast. When one of the light-houses along the coast began to flicker a signal, we stole in through the sandbars and treacherous channels, and landed our cargo of Chinamen.

FOR a week, on every night, we repeated that performance and during that time he left me alone. I found out from the little talkative member of the crew that they had been smuggling Chinamen and dope in from Cuba along with all kinds of liquor ever since Prohibition, and that when they were in danger of being caught with their human cargoes they fed them to the sharks, buried them alive down in the hold of their boats, or even left them marooned on desert islands to die of starvation.

I learned that "Chink Running" is the most dangerous and most profitable of all the smuggling, and that each Chinaman's life is regarded as no more valuable than a case of whiskey in time of trouble—a thing to be delivered when it is possible to get them through safely, and a thing to be disposed of quickly and thoroughly if there is a chance of being caught.

I have written five notes and thrown them overboard in bottles. But I hold little hope, for surely someone knows that such a thing as this exists, and no one seems to be able to or wants to stop it.

He beat me until I could stand it no longer. I wish I had the courage to kill myself. But we can't all be Joans of Arc. I am afraid to die, and yet, soon I will have to give up hope, for I have tried every way in the world to get away.

I just pray that when I put this crudely written story in a bottle and toss it to the sea that it will come to someone's hands who will see that it gets to someone with the guts to run these armed outlaws, thieves, and pirates to their own deaths.

I can't keep this around any longer. He has seen me writing it and will want to know what it is.



Prize Winners

Here are the prize winners in the Advertising Contest:

First Prize: Marad Seriov, General Delivery, Miami, Fla.

Second Prize: Theodore N. Bates, 3787 W. 139th St., Cleveland, Ohio.

Third Prize: Mrs. Lucy B. Haug, 93 Lewis St., San Antonio, Texas.

He Called Me Skyline Annie

[Continued from page 31]

was new to me. He seemed unusually nervous.

"We'll make it a real celebration," Clayton said, tucking a bottle into his pocket. "This will go great with that pineapple for breakfast!"

I continued to think it strange that Clayton should always say, as he handed me a glass each evening and poured his own, "Can't be any harm in this. Just a jolly little drink with my Skyline Annie here at home this way."

"Real New Yorky, isn't it?" I would answer.

Then one night as I ran to the door at the sound of my husband's key, another Clayton, unknown to me, pushed my eager arms roughly aside. A thick, harsh voice answered my frightened questions. I struggled to calm him, to still the terror pounding at my heart, to keep the horror out of my eyes.

He was a stranger to me, a stranger to the Clayton I loved, who came home to me. The thorns of those wilted stems he handed me with maudlin grin cruelly hurt my fingers. The flowers were broken off and lost, like the beautiful hopes of our lives. I thought.

Yet, as I shrank from him, my arms reached out to hold him. I still loved the real man I always saw, even when this other lay in sickening stupor before me.

Together we shared the agony while the real Clayton struggled with that other for possession of his body and his soul. At those times he clung to me, trembling, sobbing through the long hours, my arms his only shelter from a thousand pursuing devils.

Between the times of his torment, he lavished devotion on me, and poured out all his heart to me in worship. Sometimes I would come unexpectedly upon him, to find him with a bit of my dress pressed to his lips.

THEN he would take me in his arms, gently at first, as if he felt himself not fit to touch me, then crush me to him till I cried out for breath.

"To think I ever caused my little girl unhappiness, when I love her so," he would whisper. "Only keep me with you, dear; just keep me with you—close—close. No matter what happens, remember I love you—always. I don't know those other times. But it will never happen again! I promise!"

But that gnawing ache and tormenting thirst was not to be stilled so easily. If it came upon him at home, he would elude my loving watch and on some clever pretext escape from my restraint. If it came upon him at work, the memory of my love and his promises were swept aside by that crazing pain of appetite.

How sensitive every nerve in my body grew to the feel of what might be hidden most cunningly in his clothing when I put my arms about him at night. I learned to know well that angry glint in his blue eyes when, seizing my wrists and flinging me away from him, he would snarl, "Keep your hands off of me! I'll teach you to go pawing me over the minute I step inside the door!"

Yet, through it all, I saw the soul and heard the voice of the man I had loved. And I loved him still.

Except when we fought for possession of a hidden bottle, he seldom came near me till he fled to my sheltering arms for protection in the end.

As I stood one night, blocking his way

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out of the door, my eyes closed, and prayed that only a few hours more of quiet, safely a new beast brightly, came to his aid. He jerked me roughly to him, opened my eyes and drew back in terror at the look on his face.

"Don't! Don't!" I cried. "Not when it's this way. It's not you not my husband."

"Your Husband?" He sneered as he looked down into my eyes. "Don't you know I'd never married you if that one little year out there hadn't held me up at the point of a gun and—"

"Stop! Stop! Don't say it!" With all my strength I pressed my hand against his lips to silence his words. Then, what no physical suffering had been able to do, this new torture of my soul now did. I sank unconscious to the floor.

For a moment his fear for me must have held his devils in leash. When I opened my eyes he was bending over me in terror. But hardly had I looked up at him and whispered, "I know it's not true," and he had muttered in puzzled wonder, "What's not true?" when the devils were once more upon him.

The old, old battle of wills and the fight for a soul began all over again.

But this time I held him safe. With his eyes closed tight against my throbbing throat, I shut the devils out. At last he slept, slept in my protecting arms.

"Oh, God!" I prayed, "give me sleep, too! To sleep and never wake again—
together... He couldn't live without me
and I love him."

We both slept. But we woke.

Then came the time when he could no longer drag himself home. Like a crucifixion to me was the humiliation of those journey elevators, subways, street cars. Kindly, rough men helped me with my helpless burden down freight elevators, on and off trains, out dark alleyways.

"My husband's sick." I always explained, as I thanked them. For I knew this bag of flesh they lifted about was not my Clayton.

"He's sick," I told myself even while I closed my eyes to shut out those other eyes staring men, grinning boys, giggling girls who nudged each other.

Protectingly, I placed my arm about that thing which fell asleep on my shoulder. Oh, to have him safe within the sheltering walls of home! Shut away from those eyes—pitying, mocking eyes everywhere!

NO ONE must ever know of this other, for it was not the man I had married. How long ago was that? Urged by the fear that Aunt Cissie or Bob might sometimes come, I turned to a thousand new secretive ways. I wrote Aunt Cissie that Clayton's business took him away from home so much we might have no permanent address, and named a general delivery for my mail. No matter what the devils did, Aunt Cissie and Bob must never find us out, must never know.

Then one day, when the devils seemed far away and a badly sprained ankle chained their victim to a chair, I hurried to the post office, while he contentedly dozed and smoked and read. More than a week had passed since I had managed to be away from Clayton long enough to make even this short trip. I expected a letter from Aunt Cissie. As I turned from the general delivery window with a letter in my hand, a familiar voice greeted me.

"Bob!" I cried, forgetting for an instant that world of devils at the joyful sense of protection in his presence.

"Had to come on business," I did not know then how brazenly he lied. "And I promised Aunt Cissie I'd drop in at the post office where I'd be bound to run

across you sometimes a-gettin' your mail."

Little did I suspect the difficulties he had surmounted to gain the privilege of waiting my coming those hours upon hours at the window.

"You're lookin' fine, Annie," he again lied. "How's Clayton?"

"Not very well," I admitted. Then I added quickly, "He's sprained his ankle and his nerves are all upset. You know how it is, a man shut up in the house."

"Sure," he agreed. "Keck, it would help him pass the time if I came and talked to him."

I felt the familiar brightening of color flood my cheeks.

"I'm afraid not," I stammered: "that is, not just now. The doctor says he should see no one."

"Never mind havin' it off on the doctor. Annie," he interrupted to cut short my embarrassment. Then, with an uneasy laugh, he added, "You and me are old friends. We don't need to make no secret between ourselves that I'm not much on style and city ways and—"

"Bob!" I cried. "It's not that! You mustn't think that!"

"Sure, you're a game little sport and I know your friends would always be well come anywhere, but—"

"It's only that Clayton is sick and can't see anyone," I repeated, while my mind reached out frantically in search of fresh guards for my secret.

I STOOD before him while he talked, not moving, thinking, planning, fearing. He must not know! He must not know! "It's not really Clayton," I kept repeating to myself. I must protect my love at all costs. Clayton was only sick. He would not always be this way. The pain of my first happiness swept over me.

"What's the matter, Annie? You look so pale all of a sudden!" I heard Bob's voice asking.

"Nothing," I murmured. "But I'm sorry. I've really got to go now. I can't leave Clayton—that is—he gets all upset and lonesome when I'm away."

"I'll walk along with you. That much more time to talk," he volunteered. Then in response to my look he added, "Don't be worryin' 'bout me. I'll leave you at the corner 'fore we get where your swell friend'll see us."

He tried to laugh it off. I sought in vain for words to spare his pride. Yet how more certainly could I keep him away than with this excuse he had himself invented for me?

"I 'spose it's a swell part of the city you live in," were the next words to catch my attention.

There arose mockingly before my eyes the vision of our own narrow street with its foul garbage cans, its litter of paper, broken bed springs and discarded mattresses; the dirty children crawling underfoot, and the slovenly mothers holding the pasty pale faces of their young to their breasts; the grandmothers bending old backs under the burden of broken boxes gathered from scattered alleyways—that miserable street in all its revolting, squalid reality rose to smite me.

Yet I managed to answer, "It's rather nice," and led the way to the broad stretch of Park Avenue.

A block up its carefully tended, garden centre I held out my hand. "We're living over there just now. So I must say good-by," I said, pointing out a huge mass of brick and stone.

The man looked up and down its lofty tiers of windows, stared at the garden, the sparkling fountain which showed through its broadly arched entrance.

"Looks swell, all right," he commented. "I'll be waitin' for you tomorrow at the post office."

I wished I did not see his wistful look at the garden, then back at me. But I steeled myself to smile and answer. "I'll come—if Clayton is well enough so I can leave him."

I knew he was still watching me when I turned in at the nearest entrance. But I saw nothing of him when the attendant showed me briefly out a few seconds later.

My cheeks burned; tears brimmed in my eyes. Yet it was worth it all, even that doorman, for Clayton's sake. As I choked down my humiliation, I wondered if there could be still more bitterness in the world than I had already tasted for the one I loved.

I turned the corner and hurried on, too intent on covering the distance which reached out before me to look even once for who might be following. I must get home. I had been gone so long. He might be needing me.

I caught a down-town car. On the far East Side I left it to thread my way through crowded sidewalks to the familiar doorway.

But why were all those people standing at the corner? What was that woman who lived across the hall trying to tell me?

Clayton—he couldn't walk alone—he had got downstairs. Unaccountable strength—not quite quick enough—a truck . . .

For a second time in my life everything whirled before my eyes, then all was black. I did not know how much later it was when I first looked about me in the little shop where gentle hands had carried me. I gave a faint cry. Bob was standing awkwardly beside me. He must have heard the note of fear in my voice, for he bent quickly over me.

How rough was the skin of those hands which held my own so firmly between them! And yet how strong and gentle they felt! Quite different from those hands I had for weeks been holding. But for all the sense of peace these others gave me, I longed for those hands that hurt, those hands I loved.

FROM far off Bob seemed to be talking. Then I caught the words.

"There, there, now, Annie—he never felt it at all. He was just thinkin' of you; even that last minute, he was—smilin' that way like he was.

"You're goin' back with me to Aunt Cissie, Annie. She'll sure be awful proud to hear about him—how fine he was—comin' way down here from that swell place you showed me where you lived, just to see a sick man what used to work for him. If he hadn't a-been sick himself, that truck would never a-got him. Yessir, Annie, you sure loved a man you can be proud of!"

I felt my fingers tremble. My cheeks burned. I closed my eyes. My lips quivered in a smile, and a big tear rolled slowly off my cheek. Tenderly Bob laid my hand down. Through my half-closed eyes I saw an officer at the door motioning to him.

"Found it, mister," said the man in a voice so low he thought I could not hear. "It was all just like what you an' me figured out it was. The poor boob managed somehow, while the missus was away, to crawl down from that room of theirs upstairs and get this."

"Forget it and I'll make it right with you," Bob answered shortly. Then he snatched the thing the officer was holding and flung it violently out the door.

"Hey, there!" growled the policeman. "What's the big idea? Smashin' up glass like that on the street!"

And somehow, in spite of the hurt, I didn't mind resting my head on Bob's shoulder when we started back home.

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Too Good

[Continued from page 20]

clear, and then went home and told their friends it was a shame the way Hallie Lou Carter treated Prout, who was a good-hearted fellow if there ever was one! And that any one as aristocratic as the Carter family, *ought* to be mighty slow about linkin' up with goodness knows who, like the Prouts!

I could sense all this, and some of it leaked back to Mother, through Auntie Reynolds, in the kitchen. She would sit on the sugar tub and gossip, and we humored her because she was the most heavenly cook in Roscoe.

Agnes told me that Rodney was positively bitter over my treatment of Charley. "It's a hell of a way to treat good old Charley!" he stormed. "By George! He's given her the best he could. Nobody knows what that fellow has denied himself to bring Hallie Lou candy and flowers and presents and all those things that don't sound like much, but mean a lot when a fellow's poor."

OF COURSE Aggie had stood up for me. "It may not be Hallie Lou's fault, dear," she told him. "Charley has offended her, of course. And she's probably suffering, too!"

"Yeah! Probably what happened, he insisted on a showdown and she got sore and shunted him for good!" Rod had scoffed bitterly.

"Well, Lou can't marry him just out of pity, can she? And you know she is beautiful, and that Charley isn't half good enough for her!"

Of course Agnes saw how upset and unhappy I was, and she goodheartedly planned to patch things up. At first I said I wouldn't come to the little party she arranged, but when I saw how hurt she was over my refusal to accept my very first invitation to the new love-nest, I had to go, no difference how much I dreaded seeing Charley again. But it all seemed very cozy and nice, after all, with Rod and Charley laughing their foolish heads off in Rod's new den, and Aggie showing me all over the adorable little house. I saw my latest picture, framed handsomely, hanging over Aggie's dressing-table and I felt cheered. Worship and admiration were the breath of life to me. We were hilariously gay over the delicious rarebit and coffee and three-cornered sandwiches and stuffed olives. My heart beat high with the old triumphant coquetry when Rod and Charley went through their customary melodramatic foolery over which one should see me home.

And then, in the midst of our happy noise, the telephone rang, and Rod stepped to the hall to answer it. I don't know why, but we all stood listening, our merriment strangely hushed, and at Rod's sharp, sudden exclamation of dismay, his rapid, monosyllabic utterances, a feeling of trouble smote us, so that his grave, shocked face gave us no surprise.

"Charley, lad—" Rod walked to Charley and put his arm around his chum's shoulder. "Charley, I've got to tell you something mighty hard, old man. It's—you—" his voice broke and he couldn't speak another word.

"What do you mean? Mother? Has anything happened to my mother?" Charley trembled; he fairly shouted his anxiety.

Rod could only nod a yes, his face working, and his eyes full of tears.

Charley jumped up and tore to the front door, without hat or coat, but Rod sprang after him, and Aggie thrust their wraps upon his arm. The door banged and we two girls huddled close to the fire.

Aggie called a neighbor of the Prout's, at my suggestion, and learned that old Mrs. Prout had gone peacefully to her final sleep in her rocking-chair, and the woman hired to sit with her, had found her thus when she came bearing the supper-tray. I stayed all night with Aggie and we slept with our arms around each other, weeping and whispering, as girls will.

In the following weeks Charley looked years older, and ever so much seedier than before her passing. His clothes were rumpled and his necktie awry, when I passed him on the street. He did not call me on the phone and I could not force myself upon him, though I wrote him several long letters of sympathy and friendship.

At last, after two months or more, he did telephone and ask to call that evening. I was overjoyed. Now all would be as before. I could go on accepting Charley's adoration, while I waited for the perfect lover. I dressed in the little blue mull and made a big platter of candy. He came shambling in, his face working in his honest, open desire to cry out his grief to this dear friend. I moved the fat, satin pillows and beckoned him to sit beside me. I patted his shoulder and murmured little consolations in his ear, while he frankly sobbed into his handkerchief. Then he blew his nose, and looked up like the big, beaming child that he was, and tried to be entertaining. But it was a sorry attempt. His voice kept breaking and the tears would well to his eyes and overflow.

I felt drawn to him . . . Something motherly made me snuggle close to him in the soft rose light of the parlor lamp, in the filmy gown that left creamy shoulders half bare and displayed firm round arms. I knew I looked alluring and I wanted him to notice me, so I pressed my shoulder against his and peeped at him through my thick lashes.

But Charley just sat there listlessly and talked in his disjointed, grief-ridden way "I'm thinkin' of leavin' Roscoe," he said at last, casually.

MY HEART gave a painful leap. Why, I had never dreamed that Charley might—could leave me. Unconsciously, I had counted upon his always being near when I wanted him.

"Going away?" I managed to falter at last.

"Yes, Rod and I talked over last night what's best for me to do, now that the home's—broken up—" Charley stopped to gain control. "He says, 'Get away; make a success of your work in St Louis; you'll never get any farther as long as you stick here,' and I reckon Rod's right. Reckon I'll clear things up and leave right away."

What would I do? There was no one else, and I was getting old in the South! I would become an old maid like Miss Phoebe Ann Elder, and sit at home and sew while the dance music played! I leaned over and laid one hand on Charley's arm.

He moved restlessly and avoided my eyes. Don't, Lou! Don't, for God's sake, torture me any more!" he moaned.

Well, I would wait. Charley would not forget me, and after all I was a Carter, while he was only a Prout! I got the candy plate and passed it to Charley, but he took a piece and nibbled without the usual extravagant praise of my cooking. It was plain to me that he had not yet said all he wished to say.

"Lou, there's another reason I'm goin' away," he began soberly. "Rod says I'm wastin' your time and mine, danglin' round forever, and keepin' away better fellows,

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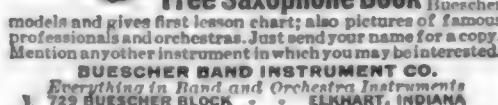
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like I been doin'. So I'm goin'. It's an awful wrench, but we can't go on like this forever. You know how much I care. There'll never be anybody in the world but you, Lou, honey—" his voice broke yearningly. "But I found out—that night—that I forgot myself—just how it was with you. You just didn't feel like I do! So don't you go and blame yourself the least bit." He rose and seized his hat, in desperate haste.

Before I could even get to my feet, he had bent over and kissed me. "This is good-by, honey," he whispered, and a tear splashed hot, on my arm; "God love you!" And Charley was gone, almost running.

During the next week, I could feel the town watching me. They knew that things must have come to a head before Charley's abrupt departure, and when no engagement ring appeared on my finger, curiosity was rampant. Even Aggie brought her sewing and tried to draw me out upon the subject. But I kept a stiff upper lip, even though down in my heart there was the terrible knowledge. "This is final . . . he didn't even ask me to write!"

I don't like to think, even now, about the cold, blank years that followed. Charley never came back to Roscoe. But Rod and Aggie frequently saw him on their trips to St. Louis. They reported an ever increasing success. Charley was in business for himself, and was doing very well. Agnes divined my hunger, with sure womanly intuition, and frankly told me that she had tried to "pump" Charley, regarding any love affairs, but he had been non-committal. Also, she told me how she had begged and pleaded with him to visit in Roscoe, but he invariably put her off with an excuse.

I tried to get Mother to go away, for a time at least, but I might as well have begged the clinging ivy to leave its sheltering wall! Her health was failing rapidly, so that I could not leave her. I even went so far as to apply for a position as assistant music teacher in my boarding-school, but when Mother learned my plans she brought on such a severe attack with her heart that I had to give that up.

No! It was hopeless. I was chained for life to the dreary, monotonous little town. Aggie was loyal to the core; she insisted that I go with her and Rod to the Friday evening dances, and for a while I did go, but it hurt me not to have a cavalier of my own, and I was now definitely a member of the "older" set.

ONE night, after Charley had been gone three years, Mother died with a heart attack, and I knew what it was to be all alone.

Judge Bledsoe, a distant relation, was kindness itself, but even his kindness could not conceal the fact that there wasn't enough left of our estate to keep me in corn-meal. I let Auntie Reynolds go, and sold the big house. Then I took a big sunny room at Miss Elder's, and began hunting music pupils. My class soon increased, and I was able to eke out a frugal living. But how monotonous it was! I would have gone to St. Louis, only I knew that it was now too late for me to learn anything new, and strangers are more exacting than old friends! For a while the town pitied and gossiped, and I suppose jealousy prompted some spiteful comment upon my changed position. But I did not care.

Sometimes, after a trying day with dull and mischievous pupils, I would sit before my mirror and look for the girl I used to be. But she was gone. This was a sad-eyed woman who stared back at me. There were no great physical changes. The black hair was still thick and glossy, and the white neck and shoulders still gleamed like old ivory . . . But what difference did it



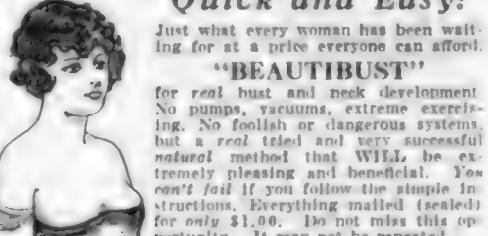
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make! There were no fervent lips to kiss the full throat, to stroke the silken dark hair . . .

Once I took hope again. There was a man in Roscoe on a brief business mission. He rushed me very hard with rides, and books and candy and flowers, and I heard myself laughing again. Then I bought a soft, clinging dress . . . an ounce of the perfume I had always loved . . . But the last night, he kissed me, and then showed me a picture of his wife and family. I became more silent and drab than ever, after this episode. However, it did seem to rouse romantic interest in the town, and again all eyes looked after "Miss Hallie Lou" with interested speculation.

Five years, in all, dragged themselves out, and then one evening Aggie stopped to tell me that Charley was coming back for the annual Christmas dance.

I couldn't keep back the tears of joy, but Aggie said quickly, "He's bringing a Miss Enwright, as his partner, and Rod and I are entertaining them both!" She pretended not to see the pallor that smote me at this news. "I want to know if you will be a sweet thing, and let my cousin, Eddie Sumter, take you! Eddie's just a baby, only twenty, but he can dance, and at least his voice doesn't crack!"

AGGIE and I shrieked over this, and I promised to go to the dance. As a matter of fact, nothing could have kept me away—not even pride—for I wanted to see Charley. I had wanted to see him all these years. But to the messages I had sent by Agnes, he had sent cool replies. I could not seek him out and fling myself at his head.

But now, here was my chance to right the sorrow I had wrought. That it might be too late—that he was engaged to this Miss Enwright he was bringing—I would not let myself think of that! I began brushing my hair regularly with extra care, and studied new coiffures. I sent to St. Louis and had an exquisite evening gown made. When I unpacked it and put it on for the first time, I gasped with sheer delight. It could not have suited me better, and I knew I was beautiful! It was soft as cobwebs, of corn yellow shading into gold, and my stockings and slippers were gold-hued.

The evening of the dance, Auntie Reynolds and her two daughters came to "help hook Miss Lou for the party." It was sweet to hear their kindly flattery. I felt stimulated when Eddie first glimpsed me, and was reduced to a pulpy, gulping state of admiration. Once at the old dance-hall, I became almost gay, as the years dropped away, and I again heard the comments on my beauty; but underneath was the terrible tension a gambler knows when he stakes his all upon that last throw.

It was nine o'clock when Aggie's party entered the hall. I was dancing with Eddie, and did not turn my head, but in that first flash I had seen him . . . such a changed Charley—debonair, well-tailored, and poised and smiling . . . and the tall, fair girl at his side; my sick heart told me she was very, very beautiful! I felt short and swarthy and over-plump, of a sudden . . . The room was a queer blur, through which I laughed and talked and smiled, catching occasional glimpses of this changed, new Charley. I couldn't stand any more. I was about to plead illness, and ask to be taken home, when suddenly Charley stood close beside me.

"Well, well, well!" he was exclaiming in his cool, jolly voice. "Same pretty girl, by Jo! Haven't changed a bit!" And he wrung my hand, his face beaming with friendly pleasure in the meeting. If Charley felt any deeper emotion, he managed to conceal it. I don't know how I bore the next trying hours.

I met the tall, blond girl, who said "Charley," with a burr on her r's, and a proprietary air. We laughed and talked, in the intervals of dancing. Suddenly Charley snatched me from Rod in their old pantomime of melodramatic rivalry, and whirled me away in an old-fashioned waltz. With all my soul, I longed to reconquer him, to bring back something of the old, begging look into his eyes. It was a last desperate chance.

I leaned near, my head back, my breath quickened, and my heart yearning with its unspoken burden, but Charley's face was blank and smiling—empty of all emotions save those of the passing moment. I was there, close in his arms, against his breast, after all these starved years, and yet, Charley could smile and nod to old friends, and cut the ridiculous capers that had made and kept him the town's beloved buffoon. How big and fine and simple he was—this lover that I had scorned in the bright, greedy days of youth . . . I would have given ten years of my life to call back even a shade of the old devotion. Charley left me with mere friendly courtesy, and I tried to keep my heart-break from showing, through a calm exterior.

We danced together three times, and each time he took me in his arms. I became more helplessly his. At last, through the knowledge of my own fierce, awakened passion, I was learning what I had done to my lover all those years! Love had proved a boomerang; it had come back to smite me! My arms longed to strain him close to me, my lips quivered thirstily for his kisses . . . It seemed to me that if his dear lips would only close down upon mine, I could die happy in his arms.

I even prayed for some such culmination. If Charley felt my emotion he did not betray his knowledge. I noticed the way the tall Miss Enwright was dancing, not only with Charley, but with all the men, with a total laying aside of all pretense to modesty. Perhaps I was hopelessly old fashioned. I felt old and tired when Eddie finally took me home.

The next day Miss Enwright left for St. Louis. Charley was staying over a day. It was Sunday and I kept to my room with a headache, ignoring Aggie's pleas that I join her house-party.

I had dropped off to sleep when I was awakened by familiar, hearty tones in the hall below. I sprang up and hastily got into my plain, dark blue serge.

He had only come to pay a duty call. But all the woman in me protested, and while Miss Phoebe tapped my door, I snatched it off and slipped into the only blue silk dress I had. I brushed my hair, dashed on a trace of my own jasmine perfume, and ran down to greet Charley.

HOW miserably far apart were we, as we sat close together on Miss Phoebe's sagging sofa! How it crucified me to hear Charley recall the sweet old times! I picked up an old kodak book of mine and we began looking at the snapshots. There was Charley on the steps of his old home, his little mother in the doorway, and I, perched on the railing. They had had corn-pone for supper, because Hallie Lou liked it! On the next page was a picnic party, and I was on a big rock with Charley's rifle across my knees. I recalled that day in swift, passionate remorse Charley had begged to seal our troth with a kiss—and I had laughed! Oh, I could have struck the silly face that smirked back at me! If he would only offer to kiss me now . . .

"I must go now; I can't stay over, after all, so I'm takin' that nine-fifty. I'm sorry. I wanted to hang round the old town a day or so, but I got a message early this morning, and I can't do it this time." Charley was getting into his overcoat,

smiling down at me with beaming friendliness.

"It's been mighty good to see you again, Hallie Lou. Take care of yourself!" Charley had his hand on the doorknob—was turning it!

"Good-by," I quivered. I couldn't say another word, and suddenly there was a brief fleeting gleam of the old love, in Charley's eyes, and then he had squeezed my hands in his—and was gone.

I dashed upstairs and into my room. Should I let Fate snatch my treasure from me, forever? Or should I fight for it! I'd fight!

"Get your fightin' blood up, Hallie Lou! Get your fightin' blood up!" I muttered, as I dragged out a suitcase and packed it with swift skillful fingers. I glanced at my wrist-watch. It was past nine o'clock already. I got into the blue serge, and my dark coat and hat, and slipped out the side door without Miss Phoebe Ann's knowledge. It was only six blocks to the station. I would walk, trusting that no one would recognize me in the dimly-lit streets, through my thick lace veil. I bought a ticket to St. Louis and got aboard, after a stealthy wait in a shadowy corner. I tipped the porter and settled myself in the day-coach.

IN a few minutes he returned, grinning broadly. "The pusson you wants has a section in fo'wa'd cah! Come with me, and I'll take you to him."

Shamelessly, proudly, desperately, I followed the porter, and presently sank into the seat beside Charley. He emerged from behind his newspaper and stared at me in an incredulous, detached amazement that did not make my position any easier!

"Hallie Lou! For Pete's sake, why didn't you tell me you were goin' up to St. Louie? Didn't they fix you up with a Pullman? Here, just let me call that conductor——"

I stopped him with a gesture of my hand.

"No, Charley. Don't call anybody, yet. Just turn away your head—and listen with all your soul, for I can't possibly whisper this but once. Charley, I love you. I can't help it if you are engaged to somebody else. I can't help it if you quit lovin' me long, long ago. I've just got to tell you. I want you to marry me, Charley. And I thought if I came away with you tonight, why, I'd be—be compromised—and you'd have to—marry me!" All in one breath!

There was a terrible, stifling silence. I felt no regrets. I knew that I would always be glad I had taken this step, no matter how it turned out. I was actually at peace, as I sat there with bowed head, waiting Charley's reply.

"Hallie Lou!" he just breathed my name, but I didn't dare turn around. I was fully aware that there were others in the car beside us. "There's never been anybody in the world but you, honey! Lou, turn around and tell me you love me, again!"

And, in spite of the time and place, we were in each others' arms, making up for the hunger of the lost years.

"Are you goin' to keep me waitin' much longer?" Charley said hoarsely.

"No, dear. I'm yours, now and always!" I sighed, and let my head rest upon his shoulder.

Then a little foreboding thought crept in. I was suddenly afraid.

"Charley, you know why I did this, don't you, dear? You know how hard it was for me to fly in the face of a Southern woman's deepest traditions, and do what I have done tonight? It was all for your sake, Charley. That Northern girl isn't your kind. She couldn't make you happy.

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